

SEVEN COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIRS IN FLORIDA:
FUNCTION IN THE COMMUNITY,
ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS,
AND CONDUCTORS' THEORIES AND PRACTICES

BY

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The purpose of this study was to investigate aspects of community children's choirs in Florida. Specific aspects of the investigation included (1) the name and location of each choir; (2) the vocal training philosophy of the director; (3) the director's practices that support the vocal training philosophy; (4) the use of vocalises; (5) the use of auditions; (6) the use of training choirs; (7) the inclusion of a comprehensive music education; (8) concert repertoire; (9) parental roles; (10) racial, gender and socio-economic components of the community reflected in the choir; (11) funding; (12) directoral motivation and commitment; and (13) where directors learn the skills needed to

direct a children's community choir.

The investigation included a direct mailing of a questionnaire to seven children's community choir directors in Florida. Information was also obtained from interviews and concert attendance. Results indicated that male directors attracted more male singers; girls far outnumbered boys in community children's choirs; minority children were the least represented; and, in order for recruiting to be successful, a well-educated community population of at least 200,000 that supports the arts was necessary.

The most frequently cited reason for disbanding choirs was the inability of the directors to balance the demands of the choir with those of other commitments. Directors focused on singing, not on the concepts normally associated with music education, and they selected music for its aesthetic appeal more than any other reason. Directors reported very little undergraduate training in teaching children to sing, and they learned to conduct a children's choir through independent study and practical experience.

Each director in the study auditioned all singers; and no director accepted children who could not match pitch. No provision was made for poor singers. Individual tuition ranged between \$170 and \$500 per year; travel, uniforms and registration fees were paid in addition to tuition. Scholarships were often provided for low-income children.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The American community children's choir is a relatively new phenomenon in the long history of choral music. The community children's choir, comprising both boys and girls, is unique in that it draws its membership from a broader constituency, rather than from a single social, religious, or cultural organization. This type of organization is a relatively recent addition to the previous choral organizations for children. Separate choirs for boys and for girls have been in existence for centuries (Shaffer, 1992), and such choirs have participated in both sacred and secular music in worship services and concerts. These choirs have most commonly been church or school-based, rather than community-based.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate facets of community children's choirs in the state of Florida. It gathered information on (1) the preparation and training of choir directors, particularly in the areas of child voice training; (2) funding; (3) parental roles; (4) concert repertoire; (5) the development of singing skills; (6) corporate choir organization; (7) the general music education of the singers; (8) scheduling rehearsals and

concerts; and (9) determining whether or not these choirs reflect the racial, socio-economic and cultural diversities of the communities they represent.

Statement of the Problem

The Name and Location of Each Choir

Several researchers have studied the boy choir (Ackerly, 1983; Criswell, 1987; Farrell, 1976; Rhoden, 1971; Sewell, 1990). Bolton investigated denominational children's choirs in southern California (1982), and Farrior (1993) briefly looked at the development of both community and church children's choirs in her study of Helen Kemp. A review of the literature showed that Bourne (1990) included a Georgia community-based children's choir in her study of director's instructional techniques, but there is no study limited exclusively to community children's choirs in Florida that examines the proposed questions.

This study did not cover the business and legal aspects of conducting children's choirs, although they are highly important areas. They have been addressed by other authors, particularly Welles (1995a and b).

The Vocal Training Philosophy of the Director

As directors teach their choirs, they follow various vocal philosophies. One school of thought results in the distinctive sound of English boy choirs, while American boy choirs are equally identifiable by a different, but no less distinctive, sound. Phillips (1993) stated that teachers receive little training in the handling of the child voice, giving rise to

the question of where directors receive education in vocal methods for children, and which philosophy, if any, of vocal training they follow.

To fill the gaps in their knowledge about children's voices, directors attend workshops, read professional literature, and converse with colleagues. Knowing where directors obtain their training is essential for the music education profession so that quality materials can be provided in those venues.

How the Director's Practices Support the Vocal Training Philosophy

Choir directors need a mental concept of the ideal sound of children's voices, both alone and in ensemble (Bartle, 1988, p. 7; Shrock, 1990; Swears, 1985, p. 51). Without an idea of the desired sound and repertoire, achieving a quality product would be difficult, at best. Once directors form their philosophies of vocal training for children's choirs, the question remains as to whether or not they have designed activities that support those ideas.

How Vocalises Are Used in the Choirs

Vocalises can form a part of the philosophy of vocal training used by the director. They can be used merely to warm up the vocal mechanism or to perfect the literature while the body is being readied for singing. Alternatively, vocalises may not be used at all. The use and purpose of vocalises form part of the total approach to children's choir singing. This study investigated them from that perspective.

The Use of Auditions

Auditions may be used either to exclude those with vocal problems or to correctly place those who need additional singing help, and are another facet of the director's approach to the choir. Both points of view have fervent proponents (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 1995, p. 154; Phillips, 1993; Haworth, 1992).

Farrell's study (1976, p. 40) emphasized the importance of auditions. He quoted a respondent in his study who said that the philosophy of the choir can be discovered in the audition. Bartle (1988, p. 110) stated that a judicious use of auditions can help to avoid future problems, including those involving health, motivation and social skills.

How Training Choirs Are Used

If auditions are a part of the admittance process, directors must decide what to do with children who cannot pass the audition because of singing problems. Some children's choir organizations consist of more than one choir. A concert, or senior, choir is used for most public appearances, while a training, or junior, choir gives problem singers time to develop their vocal skills (Shrock, 1990). Some directors may have found that training choirs are invaluable, while others may have found that the time and expense involved in a junior choir are not worthwhile.

Comprehensive Music Education In the Choral Program

The national standards for music education, published under the title *The School Music Program: A New Vision* (Music Educators National Conference (MENC), 1994),

stated that young children 'learn by doing,' and the first Content Standard for Grades K-4, Grades 5-8, and Grades 9-12 was "singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music." Professional music educators believe that children can learn to sing expressively, on pitch and in rhythm, many different kinds of songs. Equally desirable is the ability to follow a director and to sing music with more than one vocal part (MENC, 1994, p. 13, 17, 21).

While children who participate in a choir receive training in singing, directors may also attempt to provide a deeper understanding of the music under consideration. To teach the sounds alone, neglecting the relevant music concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, expression, and style, squanders valuable teaching opportunities. Music education has been accused of just such waste in the past (Mercer, 1972), but it may be that directors are now availing themselves of teaching opportunities that help children attain the goals in the arts that every "student should know and be able to do" (MENC, 1994, p. v).

Concert Repertoire

Bartle (1988, p. 194) urged directors to "be fastidious" when selecting music. She and Swears (1985, p. 161) both advised directors to select music that is worth learning. It would be useful to both new and experienced directors to know which compositions choirs involved in this study have used. It may also be of interest to learn whether directors use readily available lists, such as those published by the American Choral Directors Association or the Music Educators National Conference.

The Role of Parents

Parents occupy an important place in the choral organization. The director may gratefully receive their efforts in collecting money, sweeping the floor, arranging parties or distributing music, or, fearing the “stage door mother” syndrome, purposely keep them at a distance. The management of parents can be of utmost importance to the choir, since they are responsible for the child’s participation. The parental role is an important part of the total choir picture.

Reflection of the Community

The ideal of the ‘community choir’ is an organization that reflects the racial, religious, cultural and socio-economic groups of the community as much as possible. Goetze (1988) made the case for the choral experience to be “available to more than a chosen few,” and special arrangements may be necessary to assure that transportation, location, and finances do not preclude any child from membership. If music educators truly believe that music is for everyone, an issue germane to this study is the recruitment and retention of children from every area of the community.

Funding

While operating a choir without money is possible, it would be extremely difficult to do so. Fledgling choirs can borrow music, schedule rehearsals in an obliging church or community center and request that children wear the ubiquitous white shirt and dark slacks uniform, but a growing and flourishing organization eventually needs to spend

money. How and where the director obtains these funds is of vital importance to the continued existence of the choir.

Scheduling

Children have access to many different activities. Participation in sports, the arts, church and school organizations and family activities takes time that may otherwise be available for singing. Since the child has little input into rehearsal and concert scheduling, but suffers the consequences of any conflicts that arise, membership in the choir frequently depends on how well this issue is handled by the adults. This may be especially important with children from specific ethnic populations whose religious festivals or cultural celebrations may not coincide with mainstream American calendars. Thus, an issue which is pertinent to this study is how directors arrange their rehearsal and concert calendars and motivate their singers to commit the necessary time and energy.

Director's Education

Phillips (1985b) stated that beginning teachers are often "ill-equipped to handle the child voice" because they are not adequately prepared to "face the problems encountered in teaching children to sing." Undergraduate instrumental majors are particularly lacking in voice training, he said, but they often take jobs that require teaching voice.

If formal education does not prepare children's directors to teach children to sing, then it becomes necessary to know where directors are receiving their training so that choral and music education groups provide adequate resources. It may be that

professional organizations, workshops, journals and informal collegial discussions are the training ground for educators who are concerned about their skills in teaching children to sing.

Questions Investigated

This investigation studied seven community children's choirs as they existed in the state of Florida in 1998. A brief history and the size of the membership were obtained from each choir. Information was acquired about the preparation and training of choir directors, particularly in the area of child voice training; the organizational structure of the choirs; and their repertoire and funding. Data were acquired to attempt to determine whether or not these choirs reflected the racial, socio-economic status and cultural diversities of the communities they represented.

The first question pertained to the history and purpose of each choir. During the investigation, choirs were located the choirs and a brief history of the choir, consisting of age and reason for founding, was obtained.

It was important to examine the voice training philosophy of the conductor because this has a profound impact on the vocal sound of the choir. The sound is a direct result of how that conductor views the child voice. Investigation of that philosophy provided insight into how the director regards the child's voice, its use and training. What the director thinks about children's singing plays a key role in determining the sound of the choir, but equally important is the technique used to implement that philosophy. Examination of custom accompanied investigation into ideology. The practices of

directors may include vocalises and auditions, and these areas were important to this study.

In attempting to teach children to sing well, a director may use training choirs. These choirs are for children not yet mature enough to perform. They are an instructional opportunity for choristers, giving the child time to prepare for the more exacting needs of a concert choir. Training choirs were examined as part of the director's approach to training a child's singing voice.

The music being taught is another means of teaching vocal skills. It can also be used to teach music concepts. While this practice is advocated in the professional literature (Mercer, 1972), the question of whether or not it is actually used was deemed worthy of investigation.

The selection of concert repertoire is an indication of the director's philosophy in the areas of music education and vocal training. Preference for one composition over another may be the result of a desire to teach a particular music concept or to polish vocal skills. Information of this nature is helpful to composers, arrangers and publishers who are seeking to meet the needs of the children's choir market.

While the music the choir sings is vitally important, so are parental attitudes, for parental attitude can determine whether or not a child joins a choir, the degree of enthusiasm the child exhibits, and the length of membership. The way in which the choir leadership deals with parents may have a part in forming this attitude. This investigation attempted to ascertain directors' perspectives on parents and how these interested adults may best serve the choir.

If a choir is truly a community choir, it will include representatives from all segments of the community, including the differing races, religions, and cultural and socio-economic groups. This study sought to discover whether or not these choirs are culturally representative of the areas in which they are based.

Without money, a choir's possibilities are severely limited. It is not possible to purchase music, tour, or pay salaries. The tuition paid by singers is an important monetary resource for the choir and this study investigated the amount of tuition and how the money was used.

With the proliferation of activities and organizations for children, it may be difficult for a director to design a choral program that will capture and hold the interest of young singers. Concert and rehearsal schedules which do not conflict with the many other practices, games and meetings which singers want to attend may be crucial to the continued existence of the choir. This study sought information on how directors find adequate singing time for their children.

Delimitations

1. This study was limited to community children's choirs in the state of Florida, which has active choir programs.

2. Children's choirs in this study were those that included both boys and girls whose voices were not yet changed. All children were capable of singing all of the vocal parts.

3. The choirs in this study were community based. While they may have met in school, church, or community facilities, they drew singers from, and sang concerts in, the community at large.

4. This study focused on the directors and their perceptions of choirs. In addition, the investigation examined the membership of the choirs. The opinions and attitudes of parents and choristers were not included.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the directors of all choirs had an undergraduate degree in music.

2. It was assumed that the directors understood a basic choral vocabulary. Words such as "vocalise," "audition," and "pitch-matching" were not defined on correspondence with the directors.

Definitions

Children's choir is a choral organization in which the participants have treble voices with a range of B^b below middle C to 5th line F in treble clef (Nye et al., 1992, p. 237). These children are typically aged eight through sixteen (Tagg, 1993), approximately grades 3 - 11.

Chest Voice is a heavy, usually loud, singing voice. It results in an inability to sing notes in the top two lines and spaces of the treble clef staff (Bridges, 1993; Kemp, 1989, p. 10; Phillips, 1992a, p. 43-44; Swears, 1985, p. 63).

Community choirs are not officially affiliated with a single church, school or other organization. Choristers are drawn from the community and are not restricted to a single organization (Bartle, 1988, p.115).

Comprehensive music education is also known as 'comprehensive musicianship.' It blends elements of performance, theory, history and literature and composition into each lesson (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 1995, p. 57).

Concepts include rhythm, timbre, melody, harmony, form, style, tempo, dynamics, articulation. These elements of music are the larger content areas from which small portions are selected for one lesson plan or unit of study (Nye et al., 1992, p. 58).

Conductor is also known as director. One who leads the musical ensemble.

Fundamentals of music include the basics of music: pitch, pitch names, scales, intervals, key signatures, duration (Ottman, 1961, p. 1-14).

Head Tones/Head Voice refers to a light, concentrated singing tone in which the vocal bands contract for the higher pitches. The spaces in the pharynx and sinus cavity are used for a resonating chamber (Bridges, 1993; Crocker, 1978, p. 17; Kemp, 1989, p. 10). This is different from a 'falsetto' voice (Phillips, 1992a, p. 50; Vennard, 1967, p. 250; O. Wingate, personal communication, April 5, 1997).

Problem singer is one who lacks some or all vocal skills. (See Vocal Skills below.)

Tessitura is the range in which most of the notes, not including occasional high or low notes, of a particular part are located.

Training choir is also known by other names such as junior choir or apprentice choir. The primary function of such a group is to allow singers the opportunity to mature

vocally before becoming a member of the more advanced choir in the organization.

Vocalise is a melody sung on a vowel, often without text. Used to 'warm-up' the vocal mechanism and prepare the body and mind for singing. These vocal exercises can be used to prevent or correct poor vocal techniques (Erman, 1981, p. 53).

Vocal skills include the ability to sing

- *independently
- *with appropriate timbre, diction, posture and expression
- *with accurate pitch and rhythm
- *with good breath control
- *with technical accuracy (MENC, 1994, p. 13, 17)

Community Children's Choirs

According to the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) (*National Directory of Children's Choirs*, 1995), many communities support children's choirs today. These choirs may provide the systematic vocal training and exposure to choral literature that the school music teacher may not have the time, expertise or funding to provide. One community choir director cautions, however, that "the community children's choir, no matter how good, IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR CHORAL SINGING IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!!" (Paulin, 1989).

Community children's choirs take music into a broader arena than the local church or elementary school. The entire city provides both membership and audience. Children

have the opportunities to meet and perform with singers from other areas of the city, and to learn music which may not be available in other programs.

A choral organization that includes both boys and girls is a relatively new idea. Boy choirs have been in existence since at least the fifth century (Sample, 1966, p. 5) and King Solomon used girl choirs in both temple and court (Drinker, 1948, p. 133), but the combination of both boys and girls in a choral organization supported by the citizens of a city, rather than the more narrow sponsorship of a particular organization is comparatively recent. A study of this innovation, which began in the 1970s (Farrior, 1993, p. 122), will add to the knowledge of this aspect of children's choral music.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter contains an overview of the research on children's choirs in the United States. Since there is no research related to children's community choirs, the information in this section was obtained from research done on denominational choirs, boy choirs and girl choirs. The review focuses on studies that discuss voice training, vocalises, auditions, and a comprehensive music education in relationship to children's choirs. This chapter also presents a brief history of boy choirs, girl choirs and children's choirs.

Historical Overview

Boy Choirs

Evidence that boys have been singing in established choirs for centuries is abundant. Boethius (480-524 A.D.) cited Plato's statements regarding training boys in music, including his advice on the kinds of music that should be used (Strunk, 1965, p. 81). Choirs of men and boys sang the chant as early as the reign of Pope Sylvester (A.D. 314-336) (Rhoden, 1971, p. 417), and boy choirs were "common at Jerusalem by the beginning of the fifth century" (Sample, 1966, p. 5).

In America, the Episcopal church established boy choirs and the schools for training them in the 18th century. Trinity Church in New York and St. Michael's Church

in Charleston, S.C., trained boys to sing the metrical psalms and the chants of Morning Prayer (Ellinwood, 1953, p. 42; Farrior, 1993, p. 114; Shaffer, 1992, p. 4). Parochial schools for boy choirs sprang up, and the movement continued to expand until the early part of the 20th century. By "the late 1900s" there were more than 20 boy choirs in the United States, but this number began to decline by the 1930s (Farrior, 1993, p. 115).

The first two decades of the 20th century saw the apparent beginnings of boy choirs that were not church sponsored. The first community boy choir seems to have been the Roney Boys of Chicago about 1900 (Rhoden, 1971, p. 417); other boy choirs existed in such diverse locations as Miami, Albuquerque, and Chicago (Rhoden, 1971, p. 105-106). There is some evidence that boy choirs may evolve into children's choirs, since one study (Criswell, 1987) documented a difference of opinion in the Episcopalian church between those who favored keeping the choirs exclusively male and those who advocated the admittance of girls (cited in Shaffer, 1992, p. 5).

Girl Choirs

While some experts consider boy choirs to be the musical ancestor of our present-day children's choirs (Rao, 1989), the evidence of girl choirs can not be ignored. Girls participated in choirs in the ancient Hebrew worship service. I Chronicles 25:5-6 states that Heman had 14 sons and three daughters and "they all served under their father for the singing in the house of the Lord" (Drinker, 1948, p. 133; cited in McRae, 1991, p. 24). W. F. Cook, Jr. (personal communication, January 30, 1997) also refers to Psalm 68:25 which states that maidens played tambourines in worship. He takes the reference to

“maidens” to mean unmarried girls, with the reminder that girls married at a much earlier age than today. King Solomon used girl choirs in his second temple and in his court orchestra (Drinker, 1948, p. 133).

The ancient Greeks employed girl choristers in the worship of goddesses . They assisted the priestesses, and were an important part of the “religious and musical life of Greece until long after the beginning of the Christian Era” (Drinker, 1948, p. 91-92). Church leaders in the second century sponsored girls in church choirs. One of the most famous girl choirs was in the parish of Bishop Paul of Samosata. Other girl choirs existed in Jerusalem in A. D. 392, being used to sing psalms and antiphons (Drinker, 1948, p. 161).

The most famous choral opportunities for girls were possibly those at the four Venetian *ospedali* in the 17th and 18th centuries. There were eventually four hospitals, or orphanages, that grew from trade schools into excellent music schools performing music by Pergolesi, Vivaldi, and Hasse (Mariani, 1997; Meredith, 1997). Notable among these was the Ospedali della Pieta, which Dr. Charles Burney visited in 1771. He attended a performance and described the singing as “really excellent.” In his writings on these Italian conservatories, he made reference to girl choirs that sang the psalms in English churches (cited in Neuls-Bates, 1982, p.67-68).

Children's Choirs

Boy and girl choirs were not a subject for debate in the early days of America, but the poor state of church congregational singing was a topic of much concern. One of the

first music textbooks, *A very plain and easy Introduction to the Art of Singing Psalm Tunes*, written by the Reverend John Tufts, was issued in the early 18th century (Birge, 1929, p. 7; Hitchcock, 1969, p. 5). This book and other books which followed attempted to teach singers how to correctly sing the hymns used for worship. These early religious leaders felt that a more knowledgeable congregation would sing the music as printed, rather than adding impromptu "quavers" (Birge, 1929, p. 5), or "Turns and Flourishes" (Bolton, 1982, p. 2; Hitchcock, 1988, p. 5; Van Camp, 1978).

The idea of children's choirs originated with the singing school, another attempt to improve singing in the church. Singing schools began to be established in the early 18th century (Birge, 1929, p. 8; Hubbard, 1908, p. 175). The Rev. Thomas Walter, an ardent advocate of singing schools, wondered, in his 1721 essay, why people would assume that singing skills were any more a matter of inspiration than reading skills (Hubbard, 1908, p. 175). The popularity of singing schools lasted for some sixty years and became a favorite recreational and educational pursuit. Their importance to children's choral singing lies in the fact that these schools were not for adults only, but included whole families. Children received instruction in both music notation and singing skills (Farrior, 1993, p. 119; Hitchcock, 1988, p. 5).

A desire to improve congregational singing led to several developments in American music education, chief among them being music textbooks and singing schools which taught music reading, notation, and singing skills (Birge, 1929, p. 7-11). Both books and schools ultimately resulted in elementary school singing instruction as we know it (Atterbury, 1991). While contemporary music education also teaches music reading and

notation, the latest national standards for music education strongly encourage concept development (MENC, 1994). Knowledge about rhythm, melody, expressiveness, harmony, form and style is included in a quality program of music instruction.

The Moravians, a religious movement that founded settlements in Pennsylvania and North Carolina in the late 18th century, had a strong commitment to music education and choral music. Their emphasis on music education and vocal instruction was not so much a way of improving congregational singing as it was a means of maintaining religious practices, cultivating aesthetic sensitivity, and preserving traditions. Moravian children sang chorales and hymns for approximately forty-five minutes nearly every school day, and, as they advanced into upper grades, added preclassical and classical sacred choral literature to their repertoire (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 46; Hall, 1981).

Lowell Mason, an early 19th century music educator, was also concerned over the sad state of congregational singing. As one means of improving hymn singing, he preached that all children could learn to sing, just as they could learn to read (Chase, 1955, p. 158; Heller and Pemberton, 1996). This was contrary to popular opinion, which held that only a select few who were naturally gifted could learn to sightread (Damrosch, 1908, p. 21). Mason's music method book, *Manual of the Boston Academy of Music for Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music on the System of Pestalozzi*, published in 1834, was written for the purposes of music literacy and vocal training (Phillips, 1992a, p. 6). By teaching children to sing well, he could improve singing in both the present and the future.

Under Mason's leadership, the children of Hawes Grammar School, a public school of South Boston, on August 14, 1838, presented a choral concert in the sanctuary of

South Baptist Church (Pemberton, 1988). This concert was a major factor in establishing music as a subject in public school curricula and helped to prove his assertion that everyone could sing.

Vocal training for children, which had begun during the singing schools (Phillips, 1992a, p. 5-6), continued in the public schools. A goal for Mason and his colleagues as they taught in the schools, as it had been for Tufts early in the 18th century, was to improve the singing in the churches (Farrior, 1993).

Like his brother, Lowell, Timothy Mason promoted the idea that all children could learn to sing. While Lowell achieved fame for his activities in Boston, Timothy's similar work in Cincinnati, Ohio, is not as well-known. Like Lowell, he was active in the establishment of music education in the schools and in teaching singing skills. Timothy led a large children's choir in two concerts during October, 1838, at a meeting of the College of Professional Teachers at the Sixth Street Methodist Church, Cincinnati. The children came from several different schools in the city. In June, a children's choir was part of the Annual Procession and Exhibition of the Common Schools of Cincinnati (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 152).

An outstanding children's chorus, directed by William L. Tomlins, presented a concert at the Columbian Exposition in 1893. Tomlins had begun to work with children's groups for the Chicago board of education about 1890, and his choirs became the standard for children's choral singing. He focused on producing a beautiful tone, borrowing methods from both the rote and reading approaches (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 186).

At the turn of the century, Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller led children's choirs at the First Presbyterian Church of Flemington, New Jersey (Ball, 1981, p. 10). Her work with children's sacred music led others to become interested in children's choirs. Vosseller's choirs were church-based, another attempt to improve singing in the church (Ball, 1981, p. 11).

Ruth Krehbiel Jacobs was a direct philosophical descendant of Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller. Like Vosseller, Jacobs believed that the material available for boy choirs was of limited use in children's choirs, and that, by teaching the child, she influenced the adult (Ball, 1984). Because of her attempts to reach as many children as possible, and because so many children's choir directors wanted her advice, she organized the Choristers Guild in 1949 (Ball, 1984). While the Guild existed primarily for church choirs, its advice and suggestions worked well for community choirs as well.

As schools began to give music a place in the curriculum, singing schools declined because the public no longer felt a need for them (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 90). Children learned to sing in school, and thus did not need extra-curricular vocal instruction.

About the middle of the 19th century, a 'scientific' approach to education began to be evident and it became desirable to evaluate the subject matter (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 166). Music teachers developed lesson plans that dealt with knowledge about music that could be regularly tested (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 167). It was about this time that music series were written to help children learn to read music. These books dealt with "the facts of music rather than the music itself" (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 176). Children learned about rests, clefs, sightreading, scales, meter and music dictation.

This trend continued into the 20th century. "Science" gave way to "progressive" as a euphemism for "modern," but the emphasis on the testable facts of music remained. Music history, analysis, creativity, and rhythmic activities were incorporated into the music lessons (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 187).

By 1923, *Songs of Childhood*, edited by Will Earhart, T. P. Giddings and Ralph Baldwin, showed a turn toward a more aesthetic approach in its emphasis of music appreciation and melody writing (Mark and Gary, 1992, p. 188). *The Music Hour*, originally published in 1929, continued the trend. The authors stated that one of the purposes of the book was to show that "music shall make the child happier and more sensitive to beauty and, as a socializing force, shall enable him to adjust himself more sympathetically to his environment" (McConathy, Miessner, Birge and Bray, 1929, p. iii).

In the 1930s, the "song approach" became popular in American music education as teachers tried to foster aesthetic experiences in their students. By singing beautiful songs, it was felt, children would learn to sing and become attuned to the beauty of music. "It is the duty, therefore, of every supervisor and teacher to devote intelligently directed effort toward securing from the class a beautiful singing tone (McConathy et al., 1929, p. 1)

The vocal training, with its breathing exercises, which had been a part of music classes, was largely abandoned (Farrior, 1993, p. 13 ; Phillips, 1992a, p. 10). Phillips (1992a, p. 58) argued that this neglect of vocal training resulted in the general lowering of the child singing range. "Pitch ranges of songs in the early basal series often required that children sing to f^2 of the treble staff. Today, pitch ranges generally have been lowered..." (Phillips, 1992a, p. 16). The pitch range of early music series may have been pitched high

to encourage head voice singing, not because children naturally sang in an upper range (Nye, Nye, Aubin and Kyme, 1962, p. 5).

The legacy of the aesthetic approach is to be found in the scarcity of children's singing methodology in current elementary methods textbooks (Phillips, 1985a, 1985b) and in current elementary school music textbooks (Kavanaugh, 1982). The emphasis on teaching music concepts through songs "intellectualized music and minimized the need for (singing) skills development" (Phillips, 1993). We find little in elementary music textbooks today regarding the training of children's voices (Phillips, 1983, p. 4). As Phillips said:

Current elementary methods texts emphasize the song approach almost exclusively. In most of these sources, it is rare to find any directives to the actual training of the child voice, outside of simple pitch-matching exercises. The song approach literature almost totally neglects such parameters as tone quality, registers, dynamic level, duration, and range. What are emphasized are the appropriate means by which to teach a song by rote and large amounts of song literature. The mastery of singing as a skill does not appear nearly as important as the use of singing to develop awareness of basic musical concepts. (1985b)

In the 1960s, MENC became concerned that children could make music, but could not understand the concepts that underlie all music. To counteract this, an emphasis on analysis and listening surfaced in music textbooks as children learned to understand the music they were making. Children sang in order to learn the concepts which could be taught from the songs, not for the beauty of the music or for the chance to develop their voices (Phillips, 1993).

Ruth K. Jacobs and the Mason brothers shared a belief that all children could learn to sing (Ball, 1981, p.10, 1984; Coffman, 1987), a philosophy advocated by Lyon (1993),

Phillips (1993), the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Committee on Children's Choirs (Rao, 1989), Goetze (1988), Gould (No. 17), and Swears (1985, p. 3).

Phillips (1993) and Fortunato (1981) believed that singing is a skill that can be taught. Fortunato said:

if a child does not walk on his first birthday, we don't immediately assume that he is not "inclined to walking" and give him up as an ambulatory failure . . . we realize our responsibility to provide increased exposure (practice) and encouragement (motivation) and assistance (teaching). (1981, p. 143)

The church choir movement blossomed in the 1960s and 1970s, nourished by Helen Kemp, Choristers Guild (Farrior, 1993, p. 118), and choir directors who attempted to teach children the joy of singing. Kemp's work, begun in the 1950s, became the model for church musicians who worked with children's choirs (Farrior, 1993, p.127).

While church choirs were growing during the early 1960s, the incidence of singing in school began to decline (Rao, 1993a); this trend continues today (Lyon, 1993). Diaz (1980) found that a fifty year span of music series published in the United States showed, among other things, less emphasis on part singing. Growman (cited in Runfola and Rutkowski, 1992, p. 696), in her study of an 80 year span of basic music series, agreed. Phillips (1993) attributed this decline partially to the lack of singing instruction in music texts, but other factors may also contribute to the minimal singing opportunities. School music programs have broadened to include a wide range of activities (Harris, 1985/1986), all of which take time away from singing. While the first Content Standard of the National Standards for music education calls for "singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire

of music" for all grade levels, subsequent standards urge students to perform on instruments; improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments; compose and arrange music; read and notate music; and listen, analyze and describe music (MENC, 1994). Singing and music reading are no longer emphasized, thus the need, once again, for community choirs where children can learn to sing.

Some schools excluded arts programs, including music, from their curriculum as a result of the 1970s "back-to-basics" movement, or as a result of funding cuts. Lack of budget support resulted in less time for music in the school and music teachers began to encounter difficulties in scheduling children's choirs during the school day (Rao, 1989).

Children's community choirs began to develop in the 1970s (Farrior, 1993, p. 122). Declines in school budget and time allocations (Jensen, 1995) have led to increasing interest and growth in community-based children's choirs. Children's choirs are not associated with any particular school, do not depend on the whim of a principal or school board's budget, and fill the need for singing instruction. The greatest growth and development of community-based children's choirs has been more noticeable since the 1970s (Farrior, 1993). These choirs show a break with traditional goals of singing instruction since they are not organized to improve singing in the church or to lead in the worship service.

By 1983, the new concept of children's choirs was born (Rao, 1993a). These choirs may have the benefits of being "a musical outlet for talented children, an important addition to the musical and cultural life of our community, and, perhaps, a viable

replacement for the nearly non-existent choral singing programs in the public schools" (Paulin, 1989).

With the growth of community choirs, a division of objectives has evolved, with the schools educating for the consumption of the arts and the community-based programs encouraging arts participation (Rao, 1989). Sinor (1997) worried that private performing groups might "appear to relieve the public schools of responsibility for and cost of providing appropriate music education." She speculated that a new elite based on motivation and ambition, not, as had previously been the case, on financial means, might come into being.

Since 1980, there has been a "children's choir explosion" as many new school and community choirs have been organized (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 1995, p. 153; Farrior, 1993, p. 124). Articles, books, clinics and workshops give advice to directors and organizers who attempt to either fill in the void created by deleting school music programs or to supplement the public school programs. Samuel Adler suggested that:

the expanding children's chorus movement is, to this composer at least, a crucial development in an often discouraging musical scene and music educational morass. I feel children can do anything as well as, if not better than, adults, and the lasting musical effect is truly lifelong. (Adler, 1993)

Vocal Philosophies

Mursell and Glenn (1931, p. 278-279) made the point that "There are few fields of work in music where one finds a greater profusion of impossible ideas, or wilder clouds of mythology. The judgements of experts on points connected with vocal performance are

most extraordinarily varied and unreliable.” But in spite of the many different points of view, there were some areas of agreement. Among these were the concepts that good techniques for children were also good ideas for adults, and that vocal training for boys was no different than it was for girls. Age and gender did not make a difference in the selection of method (Clippinger, 1929, p. 5; Crocker, 1978, p. 5; Ross, 1959, p. 181F; Wilcox, 1935, p. 52, 57).

Authors also agreed that, while the technique may be unchanged, the amount of work and the extent of knowledge that a child is capable of absorbing are not as great as an adult's (Fields, 1947, p. 23; Phillips, 1985b; Ross, 1959, p. 181F; Weis, 1936, p. 3; Wilcox, 1935, p. 52). In 1919, Giddings wrote:

the voice training necessary in the public schools is very simple and easy if done in the right way. There is little training to be done except to see that each child sings in an easy compass and does not strain his voice. (p.181)

Field-Hyde (1947, p. 131) stated that “Something can be done with quite young children, but it will hardly take the form of systematic study. Rather it will be in the direction of restraining too exuberant energy.” He went on to say that “More definite training, *if judiciously carried out*, may begin at the age of eight or nine” (p. 132).

Ingram (1959, p. 82) generally agreed with this age range, recommending the age of nine years for beginning voice training, although Gehrken (1934, p. 89) believed that “kindergarten and first grade - or whenever the child first begins to sing” is the time to “set up ideals of tonal beauty and habits of singing.” Swears (1985, p. 8) gave directions for developing the voices of six to eight year olds, including breath support and tone production. Campbell and Scott-Kassner (1995, p. 127) agreed that “vocal technique can

be taught from the earliest songs by the knowledgeable teacher ” and went on to state that “children’s voices can be greatly enhanced through training” (p. 131), although they believed that private studio voice lessons are best left until young adulthood or later, when the vocal mechanism has fully matured.

Ross (1959, p. 181G) placed the age for beginning vocal training a little later - at about ten years old - and said that “children should be taught in classes.” They should be taught “normal quality, a singing diction, how to sing in the high and low voice, and how to breathe for singing.”

Ross did not suggest that children’s voices are different from the adult voice in any respect but immaturity. Since vocal methods apply equally to either gender or any age, “how-to” articles and books written for adults, as well as those written for teachers of young children, were used for this study.

There appear to be many schools of thought concerning the best way to teach a student how to sing. Ross (1959, p. 26) listed 14 different “schools of teaching singing” and stated that the list may not be complete. He described them as follows:

1. Bel Canto--“based on vocalization, registration , and vowel purity”
2. Emotional--“singing should be something you feel, rather than something you do, and not a science”
3. Interpretative--“interpret everything you sing, even exercises”
4. Natural--“leave the singing instrument alone”
5. Psychological--“the mind sings, not the voice”
6. Resonance--“voice is resonance and nothing more”

7. Speech--“singing is speech which is prolonged and intensified”

8. Organic Co-ordination--“singing is the end product of the processes of breathing, phonation, articulation and resonance”

9. Local Effort--“by controlling the bodily processes, one controls the voice”

10. Modern Scientific--“only science will teach you how to be a good singer.... vocal training should be considered as a special outgrowth of its parent sciences, physiology and acoustics”

11. Phonetic placement--“vowel sounds should control the voice”

12. Psycho-Physiological Acoustical--“singing is a physical skill that requires a definite procedure for technical development, and is psychological to such a high degree that what the singer thinks and how he feels may unconsciously be reflected in the color of his voice”

13. Register--“bridging the registers is an important and delicate process”

14. Respiration--“he who knows how to breathe knows how to sing” (Ross, 1959, p. 26-27)

Many authors, while advocating one of the above methods or another not listed, allowed elements of other philosophies to creep in. Clippinger (1929, p. 5-6) wrote that “Like everything else tone exists first as idea,” which is aligned with the psychological approach, but went on to state that “Every beautiful tone *is* scientifically produced,” which the scientific philosophy advocates.

A variety of philosophies are found in Mursell and Glenn (1931). They stated that “the application of science to the problems of vocal work . . . is particularly valuable” (p.

278), that “the only essential difference between the use of the voice in speech and in song is the introduction of definite pitch steps” (p. 279), and that interpretation is a vital necessity in singing. “Greatness in a singer does not turn on the ability to do tricks with the voice, but on the ability to express music with the voice”(p. 280). In the gendered language of their day, they went on to stress that “*we must give the child something to express in his singing, and help him to express it. This is the foundation of vocal education*” (p. 282).

While Christy (1970, p. 3) primarily believed in the song approach, he also stated that “singing is just as natural as speaking and, actually, is primarily elongation of the vowels and extension of the pitch inflections commonly heard in the speaking voice,” which is a tenet of the speech method.

Nordholm (1966, p. 17), Street (1927, p. 9), Bairstow and Greene (1946, p. 10), Westerman (1947, p. 9) and Weis (1936) suggested that the beginnings of singing are in speech. Weis said that “boys and girls learn to sustain the voice, thus producing the singing tone. This leads to melodic production which is a more unusual form of expression than the speech sounds of our language” (p. 5). Street (1927, p. 9) defined singing as “The Artistic Intensification of Speech,” and said that we accomplish it by changing the power, pitch and duration of the syllables. Those who are studying singing are learning to speak “higher, louder and longer” (Street, 1927, p. 11). Miller (1996) agreed that the same functions of “vowel definition, consonant formation, and general language perception” (p. 51) are needed in both speech and singing, but he went on to say that “the requirements for singing far exceed the demands of speech” (p. 51), the major difference

being “temporal” (p. 52). Speech produces sounds much more rapidly than singing, and the singer must pay close attention to “vowel definition” (p. 52).

“If children heard as much singing as talking” they would learn to sing “as easily and naturally” as they learned to speak (Coleman, 1922, p.100). Coleman went on to say that a child’s singing instruction can begin the day of birth by listening to family members sing naturally and spontaneously. He believed that children learn to sing by imitation and that a child who hears singing “habitually in his home, stands a fair chance of being able to sing very early in his life” (Coleman, 1922, p. 100).

Wilcox (1935, p. 19) was a proponent of the organic co-ordination approach to tone production, although the psychological approach is evident in his writing. “Voice training, therefore, must usually concern itself in the beginning stages quite as much with inhibiting the activity of interfering muscles as with co-ordinating and developing the muscles which properly function in the human sound-producing mechanism.” Before singing, the singer must first think of the tone and allow the vocal mechanism to “automatically come into normal coordination.”

The psychological approach to singing attracted attention from Erman (1981, p. 50), who made the observation that the “careless negative comments” of teachers, parents and acquaintances may contribute to the reluctance to sing, or to learn to sing. The singer’s mind is distracted and complete attention to singing is difficult. Concentration, early training and an abundance of praise and encouragement can help to overcome these obstacles.

Ingram (1959, p. 91) stated that there is a "twofold approach" to good interpretation. She believed that it takes both mental and physical responses to present a song correctly. "One the one hand...is the intellectual approach. We must understand the text, the idea, the mood, and the spirit of the song...The second approach is the physical, or rhythmic, response which children often feel instinctively."

A vocal method which dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries is "bel canto." It reputedly produced voices of "great limpidity, extremely wide range, amazing flexibility and beautiful quality" (Reid, 1950, p. 10) and sacrificed "every other consideration in the interest of tonal beauty" (Reid, 1950, p. 19). This Italian method was based on instruction in the rudiments of music notation, voice production and management, theory, composition, correct pronunciation of vowels, interpretation and intonation (Reid, 1950, p. 34-41).

Fields (1947, p. 328) surveyed 714 publications for opinions on the teaching of singing. He used a wide variety of sources, including *Good Housekeeping* and *Etude* magazines and "scientific papers and experimental reports" produced by "authors, teachers, scientists and singers" (p. 266). While it is difficult to determine how many vocal approaches he has documented, it is quickly apparent that there are many different ideas about how to teach singing.

Even a cursory survey of literature on the subject reveals astonishing inconsistencies and conflicts of pedagogical opinion. From a general viewpoint, this diversity of opinion apparently arises from the fact that a multiplicity of specific teaching procedures is being developed by individual teachers without reference to the broader pedagogical principles underlying them. (Fields, 1947, p. 3)

A method that is not widely advocated in current children's voice training literature is what Phillips termed the "formal approach" (1984, p. 11). In this method, the voice teacher seeks to cure or correct specific vocal problems through the use of vocal exercises. Christiansen (1932, p. 61) wrote that the development of "large lung capacity" and breath control "is the principal work of the singer." Christiansen included a series of exercises in his book that "are primarily for note-reading and tone-hitting" and "are calculated to develop breath control and lung capacity" (p. 65).

Erman (1981, p. 53) agreed that exercises are valuable in "preventing or eliminating faulty vocal techniques." She went on to caution that the drill patterns must be varied and "creatively evolving" to sustain interest and motivation.

One method which currently finds wide acceptance, is the "song method." Although Fields (1947, p. 66) devoted only a minimum amount of space to this approach, and Ross (1959, p. 26) omitted it from his list of 14, other authors recommended it. Christy (1970) discussed this approach by name, defined it, and gave reasons for its use:

The student starts singing songs immediately, endeavoring with the help and guidance of the instructor to interpret each song as meaningfully as possible under limitations of technic that then pertain . . . Experience has demonstrated conclusively that the Song Approach, with emphasis primarily on expression, is not only the most interesting to students but also generates an enthusiasm and stimulus that result in an even more rapid gain in technic. (Christy, 1970, p. viii)

Mursell advocated the use of the song approach:

Teach the whole song . . . Remember always that *the song itself is the thing*. . . . The time for analysis, for calling attention to this or that specific detail or aspect of the music or the performance, is after the children have become able to sing the song, and not before. (Mursell, 1951, p. 192-193)

Swanson also believed in the song approach:

The experiences and songs in this chapter center on singing as an activity in itself. The related instructional objectives and listing of behaviors are designed to be continual reminders that in an educational setting you must point toward instructional goals, be they attitudes, increased awareness of the expressive factors in music and the ability to respond to them, or singing skills. (Swanson, 1981, p. 225)

Phillips (1985b, 1993), while not advocating the abandonment of the song approach, believed that it needed to be used with caution. To teach singing by the sole use of songs, neglecting the specific teaching of vocal techniques, is a dangerous business, he believed. Children need to learn “good singing habits that will carry over from song to song” (Phillips, 1985b). He went on to state that “care should be taken to avoid a return to the days of vocal drill. Children must have time to react musically in the classroom, but they must also be allowed time to develop the skills needed to perform musically” (Phillips, 1985b).

Campbell and Scott-Kassner (1995, p. 131) stated that the “astute teacher” can accelerate the development of children’s voices by the knowledgeable use of songs, games and drills. Ingram (1959, p. 87) discussed vocal exercises and the results that can be obtained through them and stated that “exercises can be made from any sound, any word which causes difficulty” (p. 88).

Bartle (1988, p. 7) believed that repertoire is inseparably linked to vocal development. “Good repertoire enhances and develops a beautiful tone quality. Bad repertoire undermines choral development.” She went on to say that “many new skills must be learned, and older skills reinforced, as the children learn new repertoire” (p. 26).

Kemp (H. Kemp, workshop, February 6, 1999; 1989, p. 28) was in agreement with the mixture of song and formal approaches. She suggested a variety of mental images, physical response and vocalises in conjunction with songs as techniques for teaching a choir to sing. Stollak and Alexander (1998) agreed, stating that children can be helped to understand the abstract concepts necessary for a good sound by the use of metaphor, analogy, and simile.

Repertoire and techniques are of little use, however, unless the director has an idea of the desired vocal tone. Before trying to teach a child how to sing, the teacher must first know what the end product should be (Jacobs, 1942, p. 20, 27; Phillips, 1985b). "It would appear that the first task of the director is to establish for himself a realistic mental concept of the sound he wishes to hear from his children's choir" (Sample, 1966, p. 78). Unless the conductor knows the desired sound, there is little chance of achieving it.

While directors may differ about the techniques they use to teach singing, they agree that children can learn to sing. Age and gender are immaterial when it comes to selecting a singing method, but the teacher must have the end product in the mind's ear and both teacher and student must be willing to work toward that goal.

Head Voice versus Chest Voice

One concept of sound that is much discussed in the writing on children's singing is the use of the "head voice." It is sometimes referred to as the "thin voice." Small (1998) called it "a distinct and ethereal choral tone produced by children between the ages of eight and fifteen," while Ingram (1959, p. 83) described the head voice as "a light,

floating, easily produced tone” and gave various techniques for cultivating that sound in choirs. Newman (1995, p. 254) believed that a “teacher’s object is to encourage young singers to use the lighter head voice sound,” later bringing that quality of sound down into the range “between the head voice and the chest voice.” He went on to suggest activities that might accomplish that objective

Phillips (1985b) agreed that the lower, chest voice should only be used when the upper voice is well established. He blamed the exclusive cultivation of the chest voice for a rising percentage of nonsingers, and a judicious use of both voices was recommended. Weis (1936, p. 4) agreed that both voices should be used and that the head voice should be developed first. Expert training is necessary for the use of the chest voice. Phillips (1984) speculated that head voice singing must be taught, while singing in the chest voice is a more natural occurrence.

Giddings (1919, p. 31) said that the two types of voices might be called the “singing” and the “howling” registers. Children should be taught to sing softly, keeping the song no lower than first line E, and a head voice will naturally result. Howard (1895, p. 46) agreed, stating that there are two principles of children’s tonal production: “They must sing softly” and “They must be restricted in compass of voice,” as a result of which, the chest voice “will never be heard” (p. 47).

Swears (1985, p. 62) believed that the head voice not only produces a “beautiful sound but it also helps to extend the child’s vocal range and to give greater flexibility to the voice.” The difference between head and chest voices is not merely one of range, she stated, but also one of quality. The head voice is light and forward, while the chest voice

“may be heavy, dark or shouty” (p. 63). If the chest voice is extended into the upper register, a definite, abrupt break in the voice may occur around the middle of the staff (A, B, or C) as the child attempts to force the lower voice to sing higher notes. Bringing the light quality of the head voice down into the lower range avoids the break, and the singing will have a more consistent tone (p. 63).

Authors agreed that the head voice is the more desirable sound, and that children should be allowed to sing in a chest voice only after the head voice has been mastered. A head voice can be produced by singing softly and avoiding the lowest section of the treble clef staff. This prevents the heavy, coarse sound heard by singers using a chest voice and results in a lighter sound.

Range and Tessitura in Children's Songs

Perusal of children's music elementary textbooks from the earlier part of the 20th Century (Giddings, Earhart, Baldwin and Newton, 1923; McConathy, Miessner, Birge and Bray, 1944) shows a higher tessitura than is commonly found in contemporary textbooks (Diaz, 1980). This finding corresponds with recommended song ranges of the same time period. Hubbard (1908, p. 29) called for a range of first line E flat up to fourth space E flat and Giddings (1919, p. 31) stated that “children of the kindergarten or first grade should never sing below “E” (first line) or “F.” They may safely sing to the “G” above the staff.” Gehrken (1934, p. 93) agreed, saying that kindergarten children can sing songs between first line E and fourth space E. As the child matures, the range broadens and, by grade 5, has extended from first ledger line B to G above the treble staff. He went on to

say that selecting songs with “a higher compass” will help those children whose “voice production” may not be good (p. 94). Field-Hyde (1947, p. 136) believed that children should generally not sing above treble clef top-line F, and that older children may easily reach middle C and the A or B below that. Children should not be “made to sing notes which they find difficult or tiring.”

Mursell was among the first writers to suggest a change in the tessituras of children’s songs (Erman, 1981, p. 13). He stated that “the kind of high-pitched singing so often required is not natural to them. Songs pitched too high tend to block just that kind of spontaneous, expressive singing for which you should always aim” (Mursell, 1951, p. 187).

Newman (1995, p. 253) advocated a narrower range, stating that D to third line B is the most comfortable range, only extending it from A below the staff to top line F for upper grades. Campbell and Scott-Kassner (1995, p. 130) advocated a range that is marginally wider: middle C to third space C for first grade, widening from G below the treble staff to G above the staff for older elementary children.

Swears (1985, p. 162) advocated keeping the tessitura of music between middle C and fourth line D, expanding it by one or two half-steps for “mature choruses.” She went on to state that “high f’s and g’s should be few and far between and sung on an open vowel” (p. 163). Swanson (1981, p. 226) concurred, although she stated that four or five tones centering around first line E are the first to be used by new singers.

Just exactly what needs to be done to teach children to sing well is a matter of ongoing conjecture and debate. As Street remarked, “we are still hunting for a universal way

of doing it easily and well" (1927, p. 10). Phillips (1992b, p. 570) agreed, observing that there is no knowledge base that teachers can consult to know which techniques are useful. No one method has proven to be the perfect technique of voice training, and the ideas and techniques being used by current children's choir directors are the focus of a portion of this study.

Related Research

Children's choirs may not exist solely for the purpose of performance (Mercer, 1972; Monk, 1987). Those directors who do not make opportunities to incorporate the teaching of music concepts into the rehearsal miss the chance to influence the child's future participation in, and appreciation of, music. Indeed, said Rao (1993a), "the value of music performance in music education can be found *beyond the concert stage* in the development of musicianship, the experience of enjoyment, and the psychological benefits of self-esteem." Choirs that are considered to be of excellent quality often teach their choristers to become all-round musicians, as well as good singers (O'Leary, 1990). According to Phillips (1988) "choral music education . . . is the whole process of becoming a musically educated person."

Elliot (1993) agreed, claiming that astute listeners come from intelligent performers. Merely listening to others perform will not aid in the development of musicianship, for this can only be done by being involved in the music making. McRae (1991, p. 35) stated that "choir experiences may be the only opportunity for musical learning for some children."

In order to make the most of the learning experience, choral literature must be carefully selected. In choosing music, not only must the musical elements of dynamics, tempo, form and text be considered, but thought must be given to the skill level of the choristers (Goetze, 1988). This may be one of the most difficult challenges that a director faces: finding music and techniques that balance the needs of the next concert with the objective of “developing thinking, feeling musicians” (Wis, 1998).

Rao (1993a) believed that there must be a balance between the challenges provided by the literature the choir sings and the musical knowledge of the choir. By paying careful attention to both sides of the equation, the choir can be moved to higher levels of both performance and learning (Jensen, 1995; Goetze, 1988). This parallels the whole-language theory which has been accepted in education, for knowledge and performance go hand-in-hand.

Choral literature that meets the needs of children is sometimes obtained by commissioning a work (Ferreira, 1993). Directors have found that commissions benefited their students because the group not only received new music written with the specific capabilities and needs of their choir, but the children “get in on the ground level of the composing process, which helps them to understand the work and the creative thought that go into the “ready-made” pieces they sing” (Nolan, 1995). Boonshaft (1996) commissioned 27 compositions for his band and felt that it was “a great learning experience for . . . students.” Many works and new commissions have recently been written for children’s choirs using texts from a wide variety of sources and with a variety of voice parts (Smith, 1993).

A holistic approach to choral music teaches singers more than the notes on the page. Children can be engaged in cognitive activities, in addition to the physical act of singing, which enables them to solve musical problems and to understand a unique form of meaning (Eisner, 1981; Elliot, 1993; Monk, 1987; Rao, 1993a; Roe, 1983, p. x; Sample, 1966, p. 75). As children decide appropriate instrumentation to fit the mood of a song, compose descants, research the life of a composer, or adapt song texts, they gain a deeper understanding of music.

It appears that teachers are endeavoring to teach more than just the physical act of singing, for Stafford (1987) found that elementary school music teachers regarded "music literacy" and "increased sensitivity to music" as among the most important outcomes of vocal instruction. His respondents also said that teachers needed to know techniques related to the production of good vocal sound, motivational techniques for singing and how to assess their own singing instruction.

Vocalises

Warm-up exercises and specific facets of the music under consideration are included in this complete approach to choral music education. Rather than an abstract exercise rushed through as quickly as possible so that the "real" rehearsing can begin, vocalises should be used as a teaching tool (Brendell, 1997; Farrell, 1976, p. 110; Goetze, 1988; Jensen, 1995; Rao, 1993a; Robinson and Althouse, 1995; Whitten, 1996). Choral learning is expedited by deriving the warm-ups from the music under consideration (Coker, 1984; L. Gackle, workshop, February 2, 1997). "If 'drills' are to be used, let

them emerge from the songs" (Nordholm, 1966, p. 22). One of the techniques successfully employed by the boy choirs studied by Farrell (1976, p. 156) was the use of "carefully and sequentially developed" vocal exercises to develop vocal technique. Vocal warm-ups "were seen as imperative to good vocal health."

Jean Ashworth Bartle, director of the Toronto Children's Chorus, agreed, stating that her choirs begin every rehearsal with "exercises that develop the voice *and* ear." For example, the children hum "major, minor, diminished and augmented triads in various keys" (Shrock, 1990). She stated that vocal exercises "sung for their own sake . . . are meaningless" and there needs to be a purpose to the warm-up (Bartle, 1988, p. 8). Froelich (1979) found that neglecting particular aspects of a song, "such as pitch, phrasing, rhythm, diction, or dynamics," all of which can be taught in vocalises, resulted in groups that would not rate superior in singing performances. In his study of outstanding children's choirs around the world, O'Leary (1990) found that the best choirs did not necessarily have the most rehearsal time, but they made the most of the time that was available. Using vocalises to work on choral problems enables directors to correct difficulties and prepare the total child for singing.

Auditions

The question of whether or not to audition children is an area rife with controversy. There are those who stated that children should not be auditioned, believing that elementary age singing opportunities are developmental experiences (Haworth, 1992; Swears, 1985, p. 17). Others believe that an auditioned choir gives the more advanced

singing student the opportunity to "experience a refined, higher-level choral program" (Hollenberg, 1996). Bartle (1988, p. 110-112) believed in auditions, but looked for more than vocal skills. In addition to singing, she had the child read poetry and answer questions which required imaginative and thoughtful answers to gauge non-musical qualities. This helped her assess other areas, including physical health, social skills, vocabulary level, organizational skills, ability to read language, and, of primary importance, motivation.

Goetze (1988) also auditioned singers, but not for the purpose of elimination. She believed choirs "should be available to all students who express an interest in singing, regardless of their musical or vocal gifts," but only when you knew the abilities of the choir could vocalises and literature be selected. In choosing material to use with the singers, you can correct deficiencies and advance the skill level of the children.

Farrell (1976, p. 31) found, in his study of American boy choirs, that directors looked at scholastic grades, previous musical experiences and musical aptitude when new singers sought admission to the group. A "sense of individual musical responsibility" is "a most important element in the success of the choir," according to Ortlip (1986), and can be gauged at the time of the interview and audition.

Once a child has been accepted into a choir, placement in a junior, or training, choir may be required. Some organizations use these choirs to give the beginning singer the opportunity to develop vocal skills and assess the time and commitment that is required of a member of the organization. It is both a learning and a trial period for both the director and the singer.

Bartle (1988, p. 112) said that her new members, called "apprentices," are seated beside an apprentice trainer for rehearsals and sing "as much of the 'home' concerts as they can manage." She had a Training Chorus comprised of apprentices, children who "have a lovely sound and excellent ears but not the skills to match" (Shrock, 1990). Membership in either the Training Chorus or the Full Chorus "is based on skill development rather than age" (Shrock, 1990).

While directors may or may not use auditions to eliminate children from the choir, they can use them to assess other areas that are also important in a choir, such as maturity, interest, and social skills. Information gained in this way is useful in planning repertoire and concert schedules and in determining what vocal skills need to be taught.

Parents

Elementary age children commonly share the values of their parents (Swears, 1985, p. 16), thus making it crucial to secure and maintain the interest of all the parents connected with a children's choral organization. Welles (1995a, p. 5) recognized the role of parents, and says that these "dedicated individuals. . . help the Music Director take care of all the details that are required for the chorus itself to function." This is especially true in a new or small organization that does not have the funds to hire workers. But she was careful to say that parents must always function under the guidance of the director (p. 6). When possible candidates for the Board of Directors are discussed, she omitted parents from her list of candidates (p. 8), although she later suggested "former chorus parents" as potential Board members (1995a, p. 17.)

The Houston Children's Choir published a Parents' Handbook (1995-96) which provided general information for both singers and parents. It stated that "Parents are not permitted to attend any rehearsal. We also ask that parents not enter the rehearsal building" except for certain specified activities. It also states that when parents are present at any concerts, they "may not in any way interfere with the . . . staff."

The free labor available from the parents of singers can be invaluable. Volunteers free the director from the endless details that can be involved in the administration of a choir. Also, parents may possess skills and knowledge in areas such as law, finance or advertising that the director does not have. Parents must always work under the leadership of the director if the choir is to function smoothly and meet the goals that the conductor has established.

Director Education

Phillips (1985b) said that many children "never learn to use their singing voices confidently." This is not because the children are unable to learn to sing, but because they are not taught to do so. He blamed some music education programs, saying that undergraduates are not given the necessary training that will prepare them to teach children to sing. This is especially true of those engaged in instrumental studies, for they are often not required to study voice.

Music teachers who have had little, or no, vocal training, or whose training focused on a mature voice that was capable of matching pitch and using a head voice, may have a difficult time making the adjustment to immature voices with significant

problems. Ferreira (1993) concurred, stating that college students have the necessary skills and the opportunity to do great choral literature, but they cannot always make the transfer of what they know and have experienced when it comes to teaching children.

Phillips (1993) said that new teachers often have no idea what a child's singing voice should sound like and do not know what to do to correct vocal problems. He called on teacher training institutes to "do a better job of preparing teachers in this most important area of child vocal production."

Summary

With so many decisions to be made in the conducting and organizing of a children's choir, directors and teachers needed additional resources to which they could turn for help, and the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs was organized in 1979 (Rao, 1995). The first full meeting was at the 1981 ACDA National Convention in New Orleans (Rao, 1989). The organizer of the committee, Doreen Rao, stated that the main aim of the committee was to:

develop a *national awareness of children's choirs*: (a) as an instrument of artistic excellence; (b) as a resource basic to music education; and (c) as a means of reviving the joy of singing in American culture. (Rao, 1989)

Many community children's choirs currently exist across the United States, and the work of these choirs and their directors has compelled publishers and composers to improve the quality of the music they produce for these groups (Tagg, 1993). Books,

articles, workshops, festivals and research studies have expanded the knowledge base available for directors (Tagg, 1993).

The work of children's directors appear to have long-term affect on the children in their ensembles, for Long (cited in Humphreys, May and Nelson, 1992) found a significant positive correlations between experiences in choral ensembles and an expressed preference for "concert-type" music among elementary age students. Gawthrop (1997) concurred, saying that involvement in the arts will create a life-long desire for artistic expression. Children's choirs no longer exist solely to facilitate worship, but as a means of music education and as a way to encourage aesthetic sensitivity in children.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined the community children's choir movement in Florida. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to determine the extent of the movement and the activities within that movement, since studies of this type should employ a combination of survey, interview and concert attendance. This chapter includes descriptions of the population selection process for this study, the instruments used to gather data, and methods of data analyses.

Overview of the Study

The goal of this study was to expand our knowledge of community children's choirs in the state of Florida. The methods of inquiry used to gather this information were similar to those used by Bourne (1990): interviews with children's choir directors, workshop attendance, questionnaires and concert attendance. While many children's choirs exist in the state, including those in churches, schools and private organizations, this study used only those choirs which met the following criteria: choirs of boys and girls with unchanged voices, primarily aged eight through sixteen, whose membership is not drawn from a single organization.

Procedures

Determining the Population

The *National Directory of Children's Choirs* (ACDA, 1995) was consulted as an initial source of information because it contained the names and addresses of 3,985 people (B. Tagg, personal communication, November 7, 1995) who self-reported an interest in children's choirs. The 'Children's Choir' section of the directory listed 91 addresses in Florida and 104 in Georgia, for a total of 195. Georgia was originally included because it was feared that Florida might not have more than two or three choirs.

In June 1996, each of these 195 people received a questionnaire (Questionnaire A) (see Appendix A) that asked if they directed a children's choir, for information about similar choirs which they might know, and for the names of children's choir directors whose work they admired. Each name in the returned instrument also received a copy of Questionnaire A.

The questionnaires were mailed with a cover letter on University of Florida stationery which explained the reason for the information request. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was included. Approximately ten to fourteen days after the original mailing, a reminder post card was mailed to nonrespondents. When a response still was not received, they received a second letter and another copy of the questionnaire. If this letter did not produce results, recipients received reminder telephone calls and e-mail messages (Fowler, 1984, p. 54).

Informants were also asked about areas of concern for choirs in order that information might be acquired which would aid in the development of Questionnaire B

(see Appendix B). The mailing of Questionnaire A ceased when the information received was redundant. A total of 282 questionnaires was mailed. Eighteen were returned as undeliverable, while 188 were completed and returned for a response rate of 67%. The questionnaire revealed that seventeen choirs existed in Florida and Georgia was eliminated from the study.

Director Contact

In January 1998, each of the seventeen directors received a letter which asked them to participate in this study. This letter outlined the study and told the recipients what would be expected of them and promised confidentiality. The letter contained a form which the directors were requested to sign, stating that they consented to be a part of the study. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was also enclosed in the letter. Several attempts were made by telephone, postal cards and e-mail to contact those directors who did not respond to the letter, requesting that they participate in the study. Responses to that letter made it possible to determine that three choirs were not useable: one existed only as a teaching laboratory for students at a large state university; one choir in a small community had ceased to exist after one year; and one choir never formally came into existence because the director had too many other commitments.

Of the fourteen remaining choirs, four directors did not respond to the request to participate. Follow-up letters, reminder postcards, e-mail and telephone calls were all used in an attempt to secure the participation of each director, but there was no response from these four. Two other directors stated that their choirs no longer existed, principally

because the directors lacked enough time. Both directors stated that they hoped to resume their choirs at a later date. Finally, one director declined to participate, citing too many commitments. One director had temporarily discontinued his choir, citing other commitments and health concerns, but asked to be included in the study. Seven choir directors consented to participate in this study.

These seven directors received a questionnaire packet which included a cover letter that told about the study, the purpose of the study, and how the information will be used. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and any use of director's names would be cited only with the written permission of the director. Instructions for completing the packet, the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were included in the packet (Smith, 1988, p. 229).

For those directors who did not return the questionnaire, a follow-up postal card was used as a reminder. Telephone calls and e-mail messages were used to contact those who still did not respond. Fuqua, Hartman and Brown (1982) state that follow-up contact is useful in increasing response rates, although it is rare for more than three follow-ups to be effective.

Developing the Instrument

A preliminary study (Questionnaire A) was created to find the choirs in Florida. As part of this study, directors listed problems that they had encountered in their own choirs. These concerns were compiled and similar comments were grouped under one heading.

Questionnaire B used those areas which received the most comments. The areas of choir organization, vocal training, vocalises, music education, race and gender, and repertoire were also included because they were germane to community children's choirs.

The questions used by Farrell (1976) and Sewell (1990) were considered in the construction of Questionnaire B. The length of their surveys, 115 and 150 questions respectively, is approximately the same length as the 132 item document used in this investigation.

Some of the areas Farrell (1976) included in his study were not included in this research. Questions about the IQ, academic grades, and the previous musical experiences of prospective singers were omitted, while the ethnicity and socio-economic status of singers and the audition process were examined in both inquiries.

Farrell (1976) used a closed-form questionnaire with occasional open-form questions, while Sewell (1990) asked his respondents to circle a letter which approximated the answer. He occasionally departed from this format to ask for information concerning academic grades or percentages of ethnic groups.

Like Farrell, Sewell also asked questions about academic grades and ethnicity. He sought information about the use of vibrato in his singer's voices, as this study does.

Haworth's (1995) study used a questionnaire design which was apparently difficult for her respondents to complete (J. Haworth, personal communication, January 26, 1999). Directions such as "If you teach 180 days a year, skip to 2c" (p. 198) seemed to have confused her subjects, and, for that reason, this format was not used in this study.

When Questionnaire B was completed, it was field tested by five teachers known to the author. All of the teachers were currently directing children's choirs in their elementary schools or in their community. Their opinions on the length of the instrument, clarity of questions, and clearness of the instructions were solicited by using a form similar to one found in Buck (1993, p. 178-179) (see Appendix B). Their comments were considered when the final version was constructed. The teachers returned all of the questionnaire critiques for a response rate of 100%.

Description of the Research Questions

Questionnaire A, used during the population discovery phase of this study, asked respondents to identify areas of concern to them as directors. Respondents mentioned twenty-eight different issues, with some areas listed on more than one questionnaire. Similar comments were grouped under 14 different headings.

These problems and informal discussions with directors of the author's acquaintance were used to determine the following research questions in this study:

1. The name and location of each choir
2. The vocal training philosophy of the director
3. How the director's practices support the vocal training philosophy
4. The use of vocalises
5. The use of auditions
6. The use of training choirs
7. The inclusion of a comprehensive music education

8. Concert repertoire

9. The role of parents

10. How the different races, religions, cultural and socio-economic groups of the community at large are reflected in the choir membership

11. Funding

12. Scheduling

13. How and where directors are learning the skills needed to direct a children's community choir

After field testing and revision, Questionnaire B contained 132 items. Those questions addressing the same facet of the choir were grouped together under a descriptive heading to help orient the thinking of the participants. Multiple choice or check-list formats were used to make it easier for directors to complete the instrument. Space was provided for writing alternate answers. "Why or why not?" items were left blank for the directors to complete in their own words. These answers might provide added insight into the checklist answers and possibly supply new and interesting information.

Questions 119-124 asked for printed material which the director might use or have prepared for various reasons. These items might give information about techniques, repertoire and practices.

On the final page were questions 125-132. These asked for data about any upcoming concerts and for information that would enable conductors to be contacted.

Questionnaire B, the final survey instrument, had both open- and closed-ended format. The closed form questions gave the respondent several possible answers from which to select the best response. The open-ended questions were based on the closed-form items, and sought to clarify and amplify the information obtained from the respondent (Farrell, 1967, p. 6).

Most of the questions were in the closed format. Self-administered questionnaires frequently use closed questions since open-format items require constructing answers in the respondent's own words. This may make the task difficult enough to affect response rates. Inquiries which the respondent self-administers gave the individual time to research the answers (Fowler, 1984, p. 64, 66), and thus may have rendered more valid information. Items for which the respondent could not find a suitable category could be answered as 'other,' and an explanation given.

The responses to the director's questionnaire were largely responsible for determining the areas covered in personal interviews. The directors raised new areas of interest or their answers revealed areas where additional information was needed, and this material provided the basis for interview questions.

Surveying the Population

In February and March 1998, Questionnaire B was mailed to the directors who consented to participate in the study. To secure the highest possible response rate, reminder post cards, follow-up letters, e-mail messages and telephone calls were used. If the participant did not answer the telephone, a message was left on the answer machine.

Weekly reminders were used to encourage completion of the final two outstanding questionnaires. All questionnaires were received by early June 1998. One completed questionnaire was returned by fax machine, five were mailed, and one was completed by telephone interview since the director had recently had hand surgery. A response rate of 100% was achieved.

Concert Attendance

The author attended the concerts of four choirs to collect more data regarding repertoire, vocal techniques and organization. These concerts proved valuable because information and materials were obtained that were not considered in constructing the questionnaire and personal contact was made with the directors. Concerts of the remaining choirs were not attended because travel distances were great, the choir was no longer in existence, or the director could not be contacted for a definite date and time of the concert.

Attendance at concerts provided information about fund-raising, corporate support, costumes, choreography, choir size, stage settings, and printed program eye appeal. Handwritten notes were taken about the concerts, conversation with directors and parents and the music.

Personal Contact

After the questionnaire was received and studied, five formal and informal interviews were conducted in person, by telephone and by e-mail. These conversations

clarified answers on the questionnaire or explored new issues which the directors raised. A printed copy of e-mail correspondence and handwritten notes of telephone conversations were also kept. Interviews were structured individually for each director, based on the returned questionnaire, but became less structured as subjects raised new issues which needed to be explored (Merriam, 1988, p.73-74). Handwritten notes were taken during and immediately after interviews. Two additional directors proved extremely difficult to contact, in spite of many telephone calls, and the remaining director's material did not need explanation.

Treatment of the Data

As the questionnaires were received, the data from closed-form questions were written in the appropriate boxes on a chart (Merriam, 1991, p. 197). The answers to open-form questions were placed into categories. As material was entered on the chart, it was possible to see similarities and differences in the choirs. For example, the contrast in the sizes of the choirs and the higher percentage of boys in most of the male-directed choirs was obvious.

Data from interviews and concert attendance were also included on the chart. This supplemented existing information or supplied material that was missing.

After this process was complete, the information was checked for mistakes and reliability as follows:

- Each item of the closed-form data was checked to ascertain that it had been placed in the correct category. An observer selected random questionnaires and verified the coding.
- Any discrepancies found were reexamined and corrected.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of this study are presented and discussed. Each choir received a number to protect the confidentiality of the directors' information. Numbers were assigned consecutively as the questionnaires were received.

Developing the Survey Instrument

Community children's choir directors in Florida and Georgia received a preliminary questionnaire (Questionnaire A), asking for the names of choirs and directors and for problem areas in their own choirs. The resulting difficulties were compiled and similar comments were grouped under the same heading. There were fourteen different areas in the 188 returned questionnaires.

'Funding' and 'Recruiting' received the most comments, 35 and 29 respectively, with 'Commitment' (6), 'Parents' (5), 'Time' (4), and 'Organization' (3), garnering far fewer statements. Eight headings received one comment each. The many comments about 'Funding' and 'Recruiting' may have been the result of the examples given in the stem question of the questionnaire (see Figure 4-1).

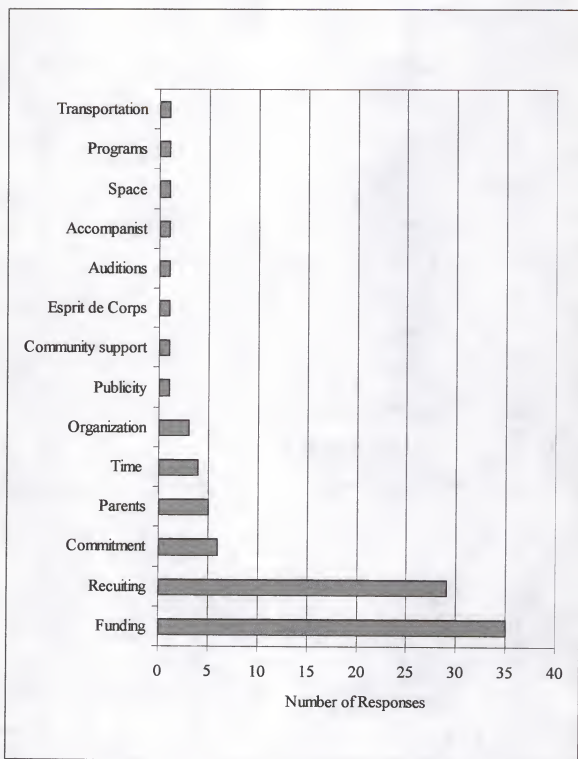


Figure 4-1

AREAS OF CONCERN

The areas which appeared to be most problematic were considered when Questionnaire B was formulated. Questions pertaining to choir organization, vocal training, vocalises, music education, race and gender, and repertoire were added to the survey because they were of interest and germane to the study.

Summary of Results

The Choirs

Florida's community children's choirs were spread throughout the state and include the area in the far northwestern section of the state, the northeastern area, the center of the state and on both coasts. Choirs I, II, V, and VI were in the larger metropolitan areas of the state, while choirs III, IV and VII were in smaller cities. Choir III was in the smallest town of the choirs being studied.

Two of the choirs were directed by women, four by men, and one by a husband and wife team, for a total of eight directors. Only the husband participated in the study, reducing the number to seven.

Information on the returned questionnaires showed that four of the choirs were relatively new, having been in existence for less than five years. Choirs I and VII were somewhat older, being between six and ten years old. The oldest of the choirs, Choir V, was the only choir which was not started by the current director, and was more than 21 years old. While 21 years seems to refute the idea that a children's community choir is a relatively new idea, the long history of other kinds of singing groups makes this a newcomer to the field of vocal music.

The conductor of Choir I stated in an interview that the group began because she had worked with church children's choirs, and wanted to "expand her repertoire and technique." She heard the Toronto Children's Choir at an ACDA convention and was impressed by the "sound and musicality" of the group. The choir began with about 20 children and expanded to four choirs with a total enrollment of 116 singers.

Choir II was a smaller group, with all children singing in the same choir. It began shortly after the director moved into the community and found that there was no children's choir. He stated in an interview that he was motivated to begin the group because children are not often given the opportunity to produce music of a high caliber, but are constantly surrounded by the sounds of the popular culture. The group moved from a church setting to a local university campus as the result of a conversation during a chance encounter between the director and the chair of the department of music.

The Toronto Children's Chorus was indirectly responsible for the beginning of Choir III. As the director wrote on his questionnaire, he felt that the school music program was inadequate, and that "talent existed in community and I wanted to prove it!" He elaborated on this answer in an interview, when he recounted how he had spent several days at a Toronto Children's Choir Camp and became acquainted with the staff. Two years later he was talking with the artistic director of the Toronto Choir, who spoke about the problems she was having with transportation for an upcoming tour. The director helped with the bus problem in return for a concert in his city. He then had seven months in which to make preparations for forming a choir in the wake of the excitement generated by the singing of the Toronto Choir. The initial choir had thirty-five members.

The conductor of Choir IV answered on the questionnaire that she formed the current choir because children requested it. The director also wanted to direct a choir that sang sacred music and provided home-schooled children an opportunity for a large-group music experience. Additional details were learned during an interview with the director when she told about the girl's choir which had existed several years previously, but had been disbanded. The director called singers who had been members of the girl's choir and were under the age of sixteen, put an advertisement in the newspaper and asked parents to pass out flyers announcing auditions for the group. A small amount of money remained in the girl's choir bank account with which to purchase music for the new group.

The current director did not establish Choir V, but he stated that the group began as an adult choir. The adults separated from the organization some time ago and formed another choral society, leaving the original association to the children. This was the only choir in this study which the founder did not lead.

Choir VI was conceived as a "children's show choir," as the director stated in answer to an e-mail question. His reply on the questionnaire said that children and parents requested that he form the group and that he wanted to work with a children's choir. A publicity brochure from the choir stated that the director believed that "children could achieve artistic excellence equal to adults" and that "this unique troupe provides the . . . area with a professional ensemble of talented young performers."

The director of Choir VII wrote on the questionnaire that a request from the local symphony orchestra for a children's choir to sing in the Christmas concert was the

beginning of his group. Seven years later, the choir had grown to include four choirs and 200 children.

Each of these choirs began under different circumstances, and has developed its own personality which meets the needs of singers, directors and communities. All of them, however, continue in existence to give children expanded artistic opportunities.

The Directors

According to information supplied by the respondents on the questionnaires, each director participating in this study had a baccalaureate degree in some area of music. Five directors had a master's degree, one had an education specialist degree, and one a doctorate.

The degrees encompassed several aspects of music, including two bachelor's and one master's degree in music education; one bachelor's, one master's, and one doctorate degree in piano performance; one bachelor's and one specialist degree in church music; a master's degree in piano; a master's degree in composition; and both a bachelor's and two master's degrees in voice. The performance area for three directors was voice, two were piano, one was organ and one majored in composition.

For all but two of the directors, the current choir was the only community children's choir they had directed. Two directors had led other children's choirs, one in another state, and one that was the forerunner of the current choir. Both previous choirs were conducted for less than five years.

Questions on the survey asked about undergraduate experiences in children's choral music because it was assumed that every director would have earned a bachelor's degree. Directors were not questioned about graduate study because it could not be assumed that each director had gone beyond the undergraduate level. When asked which experiences in undergraduate studies helped to prepare the director for this choir experience, three either listed no experiences or said there was nothing which aided in their children's choir experience. Two directors said that their own choral singing was helpful in teaching their own choirs. Only one director cited undergraduate theory, conducting and music education courses as helpful in teaching children to sing. Since instruction in children's voices is apparently limited in undergraduate studies, the question as to where directors learn their skills arises. Directors said that trial and error, workshops, professional journals, books, and conversations with colleagues were ways of learning about the child voice. One director also listed the Choral Music Experience Institute as helpful.

The seven "veteran director-founders who were personally interviewed" for Sewell's study (1990, p. 67) "suggested" that careful training is necessary for directors of boy choirs. He suggested that the ideal preparation would include, among other areas, diction, protection of the vocal instrument and tone production. None of the directors in the present study said that they had such formal training, although their own choral experiences might have provided incidental knowledge. Lacking specific training that would be helpful in conducting a children's choir, the participants have educated themselves.

Because directors said they looked to professional journals as places where they could find instruction in children's singing skills, they were asked about the journals to which they subscribe. The most frequently listed journal, noted by six of the seven directors, was *The Choral Journal*, a publication of the ACDA. Three respondents cited the journals of the MENC and the Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA): *Music Educators Journal*, *Teaching Music* and *Florida Music Director*. Two directors said they read *The Voice of Chorus America*, published by Chorus America, while *American Music Teacher*, a publication of the Music Teachers' National Association, and *Anacrusis*, the journal of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, were each cited by one conductor. Only one director listed Choristers Guild *Letter*, the publication written especially for children's choirs, perhaps because Chorister's Guild was formed primarily for church choirs.

Directors may read or consult journals to which they do not subscribe, so they were asked which journals were the most helpful in addressing the problems encountered in children's choirs. Three directors listed the Choral Journal. *Chorus America* and *Anacrusis* were each cited by one director. Two directors said that no one journal was of particular help, but occasional articles in any of the journals were useful.

Each director, when asked on the questionnaire what undergraduate experiences would have been helpful to their current choir tasks, stated that they would like to have had exposure to children's choirs, their vocal capabilities and the literature available for children's choirs. They also listed observations, hands-on experiences, laboratory experiences, interning with a children's choir, a master class with a choir director after a

concert, hearing a good children's choir, and vocal techniques for children as desirable for undergraduate study. The director of Choir VI said that he would like to participate in "workshops with [a] typical children's choir director."

To help in current and future directing tasks, three of the seven directors said they would benefit from help with choral literature. They thought that a workshop or some opportunity for a comprehensive study of repertoire was important. Also considered helpful were choir management workshops, conducting workshops, clinicians to work with and discuss the child's voice, and two directors thought a workshop by the Toronto Children's Choir would be helpful.

Directors have apparently not received much undergraduate help in forming and directing children's choirs. They must learn the skills they need through professional literature, discussions and workshops.

Useful Resources

Each of the seven directors involved in this study tended to cite many of the same authors, books and clinicians on the questionnaire. Doreen Rao, author of *We Will Sing! Choral Music Experience for Classroom Choirs* (1993b) and the *Choral Experience Series—Education Through Artistry* (1987), was cited by five directors. Four directors mentioned Jean Ashworth Bartle of the Toronto Children's Choir and her book, *Lifeline for Children's Choirs* (1988), as among the most helpful sources; and Helen Kemp, *Of Primary Importance* (1989), was referred to by three directors. Others mentioned as influential were as follows:

Linda Swears, *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* (1985)

Nancy Poore Tufts, *The Children's Choir* (1965)

Susie Page

Henry Leck of the Indianapolis Children's Choir

The Choral Music Experience Institute workshops

Ann Small of the Stetson Children's Choir

Lynn Gackle of the Tampa Children's Choir

University of Florida International Voice Symposium

Anton Armstrong

ACDA conventions

Michael Houlahan and Philip Tacka, *Sound Thinking* (1990)

J. C. McKinney, *Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults* (1994), and

The Tapiola Children's Choir of Finland.

Absent from this list was the Choristers Guild, an organization formed to help children's choir directors "develop their choirs both musically and spiritually" (Farrior, 1993, p. 118). The Guild publishes music for treble voices and a newsletter which is designed to increase the skills and knowledge of conductors. It also holds choral festivals, so it would seem that the organization would be visible enough for the participants in this study to be aware of it, but the religious connotations of the organization may make the leaders of these secular choirs want to avoid it.

Directors may not have received undergraduate training in children's voices, but they have used many resources to learn the skills and knowledge they need to conduct

their choirs. Each of these participants has sought additional study beyond the undergraduate degree, both in a formal academic setting and independently. Although four directors pursued non-vocal performance areas, they chose to lead a choir. It would appear that these choir directors welcome new challenges and seek the knowledge that will enable them to be successful in their ventures.

Characteristics of Choir Membership

The sizes of the total choir organizations, as given on the questionnaires and in e-mail messages, ranged from 30 to 200 children, with three choirs being in the 30-40 membership range. Choir II had 56 singers, Choir I had 116, Choir V had 140, and Choir VII was the largest with 200 singers.

If a choir had more than one singing group within an organization, directors were asked on the questionnaire for the number of boys and the number of girls in the most advanced group. They were also asked for the number of children in several different ethnic categories within that same group.

Only three choirs had more than one singing group within an organization: Choirs I, V, and VII. Choir I had 36 in the Touring Choir, Choir V had 62 in the Advanced Choir and Choir VII had 94 in the Concert Choir (see Figure 4-2).

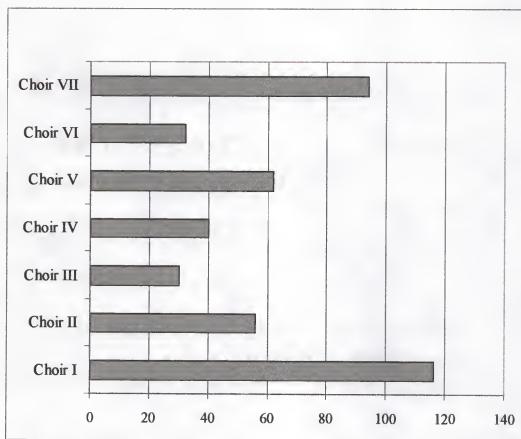


Figure 4-2

NUMBER OF SINGERS

Girls outnumbered boys in all of these choirs. The two women directors reported a lower percentage of boys in their choirs, with 17% and 18%, while the men had greater success in recruiting boys. Choir II had 21% boys, Choir VII had 27%, Choir VI had 34%, and Choir III had the highest percentage of boys with 47%. However, the lowest percentage of boys, 10%, was found in Choir V, with a male director (see Figure 4-3). This would seem to suggest that male directors are more successful at attracting boys.

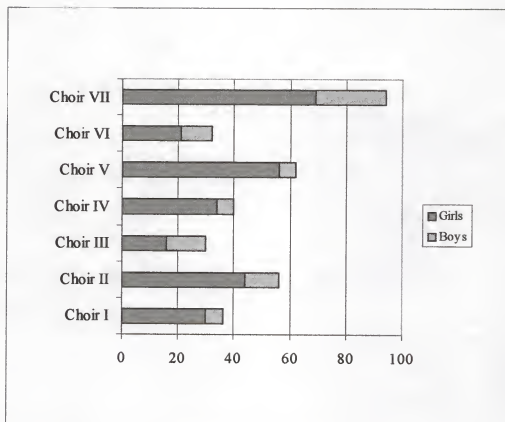


Figure 4-3

GENDER OF SINGERS

Several different ethnic backgrounds were represented in the choirs, with white, black and Hispanic children being predominant. Questionnaire answers revealed that Asian, Indian, Turkish, Filipino, and Haitian children also sang in these choirs, but in far fewer numbers. Choir III had 14 Filipino children out of a total enrollment of 30 singers. The director said in an interview that the Filipino community in his town was strong and very supportive of the arts, many sending their children to a private denominational school which was very arts-focused. The highest percentage of Hispanic singers was to be found in the south Florida choir, but, considering the ethnic mix of this area of the state, this was perhaps to be expected. The chorister most often seen in Florida community children's

choirs was a white girl. A large majority of the singers in the boy choirs in Sewell's study (1990, p. 279) were also Caucasian, and Farrell (1976, p. 24, 30) found the same phenomenon in the boy choirs he studied, for 74.2% of the singers were Caucasian.

When asked if the directors intended for the membership of the choir to reflect the race, socio-economic, income and ethnic diversity of the community, the directors of Choirs I, V, VI, VII said "yes" on their questionnaires, with one director stating that the choir "should be reflective of the community." The others replied "no," with a common reason being that any singer was welcome to sing, regardless of characteristics. A director stated in an interview that the membership was determined by the quality of the singing and by who decided to audition. In no case was it felt that race or income were used to eliminate a child. The most commonly stated reason for excluding children was an inability to sing well.

Directors were also asked if they had tried to recruit children from the various races and income groups. One director stated in both interview and questionnaire response that no special effort had been made to do so, the primary goal of the group being to "provide children with artistic experiences through the performance of choral music; whoever has come, has come." Another stated on the questionnaire that the choir was "continually trying" to recruit membership which reflected the diversity of the community, but had been unsuccessful. Three choirs reported on the questionnaire that lack of support by the families, particularly low income parents, was the reason a more diverse membership was difficult to recruit. One director cited the distance to rehearsals as a barrier for some families and another maintained that tuition was too expensive.

Choir Organization

Questionnaire answers showed that four Florida community children's choirs were organized so that all children sing in the same choir, while three choirs, I, V, and VII, had more than one choir within the organization. Choir I had four choirs, Choir V had three, and Choir VII had three choirs with an additional ensemble selected from the most advanced group. The most advanced choirs in multi-choir organizations had the largest membership.

Additional choirs give the directors the opportunity to more exactly suit the level of the music to the ability of the singers. Those with less ability have the opportunity to develop their skills and voices, while those who already know the basic techniques of choral work can be challenged with more difficult music.

When interviewed, two directors whose organizations contain only one choir spoke of such an opportunity for their singers. They realized the advantage this gave the children, but had not established additional choirs because of time and space constraints.

The three choirs who had more than one ensemble in the organization were the three oldest, with at least seven years of existence. If the other choirs continue to endure and grow, they may also add training and preparatory choirs.

Singers in training choirs generally remained in that choir until they showed that they could move to a higher level of music-making, perhaps one to two years. These choirs also give children time to develop their voices, to become accustomed to singing music of a different nature, and to singing for a longer period than they have possibly encountered at school. This parallels what Farrell (1976, p. 30) found in his study of boy

choirs, where singers were encouraged to spend one year in a training period and to “demonstrate the ability to move to a higher performance level.”

In Choir V the director of the most advanced group also directed the training groups, while in Choirs I and VII the training choirs were conducted by someone else. In Choir I, information in the concert program showed that a public school or university music teacher taught the training choirs, and the director of Choir VII, which was headed by a husband and wife team, stated in an interview that he conducted the most advanced group while she was in charge of the training choirs.

Training choirs are valuable assets for any choral organization, for they provide singers to fill openings in the more advanced choirs and they enable children to develop vocal skills. Conductors of these choirs are usually not the founder of a multi-choir organization, for he or she usually conducts the more advanced choir, leaving the teaching of the most basic singing skills to someone else. The founder needs to carefully oversee the training choirs, however, and be sure that skills are taught uniformly in all the choirs.

Staffing

Directors reported on their questionnaires that each choir had at least two people on the staff: one director and one accompanist. Choir VI added a librarian for a total of three. Choir V used a staff of four: a director, an assistant director and two accompanists, while Choir VII had five on staff: two directors, a chorus manager, an accompanist and a choreographer. The largest staff was that of Choir I with a total of nine: four directors (one for each choir), four accompanists (one for each choir) and a vocal coach. The boy

choirs in Farrell's 1976 study had an average of "3.17 persons on their musical staffs" (p. 15).

Each of these additional people required money for salaries, supplies and expenses, however, and, unless the funds can be secured through increased tuition or gifts, this may make a larger staff prohibitive. Unpaid workers are always a possibility, but the quality of work may not be what is desired and it is more difficult to dismiss the services of an eager volunteer.

Only two choirs, III and IV, reported on their questionnaires that they used student officers. These children were not in places of ongoing responsibility, but were used to lead section rehearsals. The director of Choir IV said in an interview that the recipients of student leadership awards were used as section leaders and these singers were given partial scholarships.

Two directors who did not use student help said on the questionnaires that they had not considered doing so, that the choirs worked well without student help or that doing so was time-consuming. The conductor of Choir VI stated that student officers were a possibility for future seasons. Community choirs, as with other musical organizations, are places in which leadership skills can be cultivated, but it takes time and effort to do so. A parent supervisor of student helpers might be one way in which directors can develop skills without detracting from the prime mission of the conductor.

All staff members, whatever their status, are important, but one of the most crucial appointments is the accompanist. A sensitive, responsible pianist is invaluable and can make the difference in the success or failure of a choir, and, because good accompanists

are so valuable, the organization might consider paying the pianist if the director is salaried. Sewell (1990, p. 141) found that 84% of the choirs in his study employed accompanists, while only 22% of the conductors did their own accompanying, and said that an accompanist is "critical to the existence of a new choir" (p. 140).

Directors should hire or recruit the best people possible for their choirs and expect their best efforts. In return, workers should be "recognized for their huge contribution and . . . thanked formally" (Bartle, 1988, pp. 195-198).

Director's Vocal Philosophies

Directors were asked on the questionnaire if they had a mental concept of the sound that they wished the choir to make. The answer was "yes" in each case. As one conductor commented, "How could you function without it?" Jean Ashworth Bartle of the Toronto Children's Choir, believed that "the conductor must have in his/her mind the ideal sound and the clear perception of the final product before starting to rehearse a work" (Shrock, 1990). Judging the sound that the choir produces against the standard in the director's mental ear was apparently the way in which the sound was evaluated.

The ideal sound for which these directors were listening was described in interviews and on questionnaires in various ways: "clear, supported tone," "in tune," "warm, rounded tone," "vibrant, healthy, natural sound," "free head tone," "much head voice." Four directors cited "round," "good," or "uniform" vowels as essential to an ideal sound, the most frequently mentioned characteristic of a good choral sound, and three directors stated that the ideal children's sound contains no vibrato.

Vibrato, they said on the questionnaires, can be allowed to develop with maturity, an opinion which was agreed with by five of the six directors in Farrell's (1976, pp. 109, 155) study of boy choirs. Pre-puberty voices should be restricted in the amount of vibrato heard, particularly if it is a problem.

According to information given on the questionnaire, five of the directors considered that children's voices have two distinct registers: a head voice and a chest voice. Ideally, no break occurs between the registers; only one equalized register can be heard, particularly after training. Only one director thought of the singing voice as having three registers (upper, middle and lower) and one considered the voice to be one equalized register.

In Farrell's (1976, p. 108) study, the directors were divided in their opinions regarding singing registers, as they were in this study. Of the six choirs used in his study, "three directors recognized two distinct registers: the head and chest voice," and three "reported three distinct registers; the head, middle and chest voice."

The most frequently mentioned method of teaching children to sing well was modeling. All seven directors stated on the questionnaires that they show their children how to sing by singing for them. They also used praise and had their choir listen to recordings of other children's choirs that sang with the desired sound. Three conductors stated that they use private meetings or private coaching with their children to help them achieve the desired sound. One director said in an interview that she had the child listen to a tape recording of his or her own singing and critique it. This enabled the child to have a

better idea of what he or she sounded like and how that differed from the desired sound, thus making it easier and quicker to produce the sound the director was seeking.

One director stated that he had the children do vocal exercises in different registers, identifying the sound and feel of each. This made it possible to discuss the registers and request a particular sound needed for a specific musical selection.

When encouraging their singers to produce the desired sound, directors had particular phrases which they had found to work. Among them were: "Don't sound like kindergartners," "move the sound forward in your mouth," "energize," "sparkle," "float," "spin the sound," and "sing on the breath."

Every director answered "yes" when asked if posture and breathing were related, which agreed with Chivington's statement that "once posture is in place, the children can practice breathing" (1998). The reasoning was that "changing posture changes sound," that "proper alignment leads to better or more effective inhalation," or that "good posture allows better breathing and an expanded rib cage." One director stated on the questionnaire that "demonstrations made a believer out of him." Stufft (1998) concurred, stating that "one of the most common problems with singing . . . is poor posture" and that "poor posture makes proper breathing difficult."

To achieve the desired posture, all the directors had developmental drills that they used. These drills were used because, as one director said on the questionnaire, "they work." Another director said that good posture was achieved through drills and through "nagging and praising." He also used a general description of good posture. Bartle (1988,

p. 113) suggested that posture is one area that can be concentrated on during the warm-up section of a rehearsal.

Along with drills and exercises designed to teach posture, breathing drills were also used by each director. Directors used "a large variety" of exercises "to make children aware of the importance of breath." One director used the exercises to "activate and identify the muscles involved" in breathing and to "elongate breath for long phrases." A director wrote on the questionnaire that he used breathing drills to "get the diaphragm going," while another wanted to "help singers realize that they can sing longer phrases with one breath" because, as a director said, "singers don't speak in long phrases."

As with posture and breathing, directors had procedures designed to build vocal technique. Study of the music being rehearsed was possibly the favorite way, being mentioned on the questionnaire by six of the directors. They rehearsed trouble spots in isolation, taught the desired singing skills, and reassembled the composition.

These techniques were used "to plant the sound, and then get it into the repertoire," or, as one director put it, because "it works." Directors also used this as a time management system, since to base vocal exercises on a passage from the music "accomplishes two tasks at once:" learning the music and building skills. Two directors agreed that this technique "relates the technique to the music" and made a "more immediate connection to why the technique is necessary in a particular piece."

All the directors used vocal warm-ups in rehearsal. These were used not only to warm up the muscles used in singing, but to "prepare the voice and body for work." One director said on the questionnaire that vocal warm-ups are "critical to build sound, tone

and technique." Three conductors used this time to "clear the mind of outside thoughts" and to "get them thinking musically." Work on "range expansion" and the opportunity to "focus students and train their ears for the sound we are seeking" were other reasons that directors use vocal warm-ups.

As with the development of vocal technique, warm-up material was often abstracted from problem areas in the music, an idea that Telfer agreed with (Brendell, 1997). She felt that "conductors should note what vocal challenges arise in the repertoire and make sure they are covered very well in the warmups." One director said on the questionnaire that he separated problems and worked on them during warm-ups because "rehearsal goes smoother when rough spots have already been ironed out" and that it "assists in memorization." Other directors liked working in this way because doing so made the children aware of the problem and that "when problems are isolated, you can better hear what's happening."

Directors also used the traditional vocal exercises, often in conjunction with the problem area exercises. Gackle believed in using vocalises taken from the music, because this "cuts down on teaching time." She also used warm-ups to teach technique (L. Gackle, workshop, February 1, 1997), as did Kemp (H. Kemp, workshop, February 6, 1999). Erman (1981, p. 53) wrote that vocal exercises can be a valuable part of the singer's routine and can be used to eliminate or prevent problems.

One director stated that "most problems are fixed in the context in which they occur," rather than in vocalises. Christy (1965, p. viii) called this the "Song Approach," and said that "experience has demonstrated conclusively that the Song Approach, with

emphasis primarily on expression, is not only the most interesting to students but also generates an enthusiasm and stimulus that result in an even more rapid gain in technic.” Farrell (1976, p. 155) found that boy choir directors used the music being studied for “teaching and developing articulation.”

Only two directors stated on their questionnaires that they did not isolate problems in the musical score and fix them during the warm-up. One stated that “vocal warm-ups are for exploration while ‘work’ is for rehearsal.” Phillips (1985b, 1993) called this the Formal Approach to singing and believed (1985b) that “the inherent danger” in the song approach was that “it is doubtful that the *skill* of singing will be taught.”

During the warm-up, directors most often worked on rhythm and melody. One used this opportunity to work on diction and placement of the tone in the head voice, while another taught vowel formation. Directors used the warm-up portion of the rehearsal to accomplish a variety of tasks that resulted in a better sound.

Auditions

The question of auditions was not controversial among these seven community choir directors. Each one auditioned singers for their choirs in a variety of ways, which was identical to Farrell’s (1976, p. 52) finding in his study of American boy choirs where each group mandated a vocal audition in addition to other requirements. Sewell (1990, p. 203) reported that all thirty-two responding directors “affirmed that admission into their boychoir organizations is regulated by a pre-entrance audition process.”

No director admitted singers who could not match pitch. Among the audition techniques was singing a round, used by one director, and solo singing, used by six of the directors. One director stated that, while his prospective singers were auditioned, it was not an exacting test. He planned to more closely test the children when his organization became large enough to support two choirs. All directors were concerned about the child's desire to sing in the choir, and considered that aspiration during the audition. Directors also weighed tonal strength, vocal timbre, and the ability to match pitch patterns when assessing a child's ability to sing in the choir. One director listened for the ability to hold a part and another considered self-reliance during the audition. How a singer's voice would blend with other voices in the ensemble was also a consideration during auditions.

Sewell (1990, p. 209) who advised that those conducting auditions should listen for "potential, not [the] finished product." This agreed with another participant in Sewell's investigation (p. 209) who said that he preferred an "eight year old who has had NO previous training. If he can match notes, he goes into my cadet/training choir."

The value of training choirs came sharply into focus when auditions were discussed. None of the directors involved in this study accepted children who could not match pitch, and yet there were children who want very badly to sing but cannot meet the standard set for entrance into one of these community choirs. The goal of beautiful music that these directors have set for themselves and their choirs is exceedingly laudable, and it is all but impossible to achieve with even one or two voices marring the sound. Not to help a child who is willing to be helped, though, is not in the best interests of the child or of music, and it is in this area that training choirs and vocal coaches are invaluable.

The director of Choir II stated during a conversation that Jean Ashworth Bartle's staff, of the Toronto Children's Choir, met with parents during the child's audition. The staff sought to be sure the parents understood the commitment of time and money that would be required of a chorister and his or her family. This director seemed to feel that this parent "audition" would at least partially solve the problem of parents who did not always bring their children to rehearsal and concerts.

Rather than using a panel of judges to evaluate the auditions, each of the seven directors relied on his or her own judgment. This made it easier to conduct auditions because several people did not have to be assembled, and it was less threatening for the child who did not have to sing in front of a group.

A variety of reasons were given when directors were asked on the questionnaire why they did not admit singers who could not match pitch. The largest choir had too many singers apply who could match pitch and it did not have room for others. One choir gave poor singers a trial period and private lessons, while another encouraged those who could not match pitch to study and re-audition. As one director stated on the questionnaire and in an interview, experience at this level is "for kids who can match pitch," and to use poor singers "compromises the integrity of the goals and objectives" of the choir. Hollenberg (1996) feels that, while an auditioned children's choir should remain flexible and lenient, "students with musical ability should be able to experience a refined, higher-level choral program without being held back by those who are not developmentally ready for such an experience."

Since directors do not admit poor singers, they can spend their time refining the sound, rather than teaching basic pitch matching skills. This allows them to focus on music making.

Comprehensive Music Education

When asked on the questionnaire if they used the choral literature to teach music concepts, every director answered "yes." They gave various reasons for this, including "it exposes young people to literature and cultures," "it rounds the musical experience," and establishes "a connection to the purpose it serves." One director stated that "It can provide a wealth of information to teach style, concepts, theory, ear training and sight singing."

Information from questionnaire responses showed that six directors found that melody was the easiest concept to teach with the choral literature under study. Six directors taught dynamics and rhythm, and five directors used the music being sung to teach form and tempo. Four respondents taught style with the repertoire. In contrast, harmony and texture (cited by three directors), style and tone color (two directors), tempo, timbre, and form (one director each) were considered difficult to teach with the choral literature being studied.

About half (three) of the directors stated that they did not look for choral literature which will teach specific music concepts. When asked why they did not select music with concept teaching in mind, one stated in the questionnaire response that "this is not how I choose music." Another said that he selected music "for beauty (and) variety of

experience” rather than for the concepts that can be taught with it. A director who selected music with teaching possibilities stated that “excellent music provides for musical growth.” Another director “looks for music suitable (in range) for my voices and *then* uses it to teach specific concepts.” Music is selected for its intrinsic beauty, not for the concepts which can be taught with it, which is consistent with the mission of a group organized to sing, as these choirs are.

Music concepts can be taught with activities other than singing, and directors were asked about their use of such teaching strategies. Only two directors did not use these alternate methods, stating on the questionnaire that doing so was “time consuming,” “usually not necessary,” and it was “not connected to the music.” One who used such activities did so “to increase musicianship.”

The learning activities used to teach music concepts are varied and included such things as moving, listening (six directors), singing (five directors), sight reading (three directors), and playing instruments (two directors). Every director taught music reading with the music the choir is performing because this “broadens the learning experience,” and “meets the goals and objectives of the choir.” Music reading has immediate benefits to the organization since singers who can read music can learn parts faster and easier, making a larger repertoire possible.

Repertoire

Repertoire seemed to present one of the biggest problems for directors. Three respondents specifically stated on their questionnaires that they would welcome

workshops or study of available children's choir music. Various professional organizations such as MENC, ACDA, and FMEA attempt to help directors in their search for music by holding reading sessions during their conventions. The *Choral Journal*, published by ACDA, reviews music and publishes an annotated list frequently, and music publishers are usually pleased to add potential customers to their mailing lists. Conversations with fellow directors are another way of searching out music, as is attendance at concerts.

Unfortunately, the perfect repertoire list does not exist, for each choir is different, its needs and capabilities unique. Prospective directors must prepare to spend sufficient time on literature research to ensure that the music selected for his or her choir meets all requirements.

Most directors did not use a published repertoire list when selecting music. Only two said that they used such a list. All directors looked for music in a variety of places, such as recordings and clinicians' suggestions. Once a source has proven helpful in finding music, directors returned to that source.

Just as directors sought literature that was suitable for teaching specific music concepts, so some directors kept the diction and vocal problems of their group in mind when they were buying music. Four directors said on their questionnaires that they looked for music that would help them correct vocal and diction problems. It is "a teaching tool" said one director, while another thought that "it gives members a sense of accomplishment."

Correcting these problems was not always the prime consideration, however, for, as three directors said, music is chosen because for its "intrinsic value" and problems are

corrected within the context of the music. The directors in Farrell's (1976, pp. 151, 157) study also said that "personal preferences and audience appeal" were the "principal criteria for the selection of music."

The vocal range of the music selected fell generally between middle C and fifth line F. Three directors have considered music that goes as high as G or A, while one said on his questionnaire that he liked to keep the music in the upper range, but had considered a lower range if it fit the text.

Directors have sought music that is appropriate for their singers and has intrinsic value. However, they have also commissioned new music, a practice advocated by Boonshaft (1996) and practiced by "many choirs" in Rhoden's study (1971, p. 422). Four of the seven directors stated that their groups had commissioned music, and they are not alone. Ferreira (1993) noted that one trend in children's choral music is that "the need for excellent choral repertoire by children's choirs has resulted in the . . . publication of many newly commissioned works."

The study participants plan to do so again, one stating that a new work is commissioned "every season." In two choirs, the director did any necessary writing or arranging.

Works which have been commissioned by the choirs involved in this study are:

Akakomborerwa--Lee Kesselman--4 part treble; percussion accompaniment; Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

The Boy Who Laughed at Santa Claus--Eric Whitacre--SATB and Children's choir, chamber orchestra and piano accompaniment; unpublished manuscript available from the composer.

Light A Candle - John Purifoy, writing as Michael Andrews--2 part treble; piano accompaniment; New Horizons Publishers.

A Psalm of Life--Malcolm Daglish--3 part treble; hammered dulcimer accompaniment; Plymouth Music Co.

Praise God--Budd Udell--2 part treble; French horn and piano accompaniment; unpublished manuscript available from the composer.

Where Dwells the Soul of My Love--James Mulholland--3 part treble; keyboard and oboe accompaniment; Plymouth Music Co.

Yo Le Canto Todo El Dia--David Bruner--2 part treble; piano and handclap accompaniment; Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

As O'Toole (1999) found, contemporary composers write for children's choirs, and the music they have produced is diverse and challenging. Accompaniments used instruments other than the traditional piano, and the voice parts vary (Smith, 1993), which is consistent with the commissioned compositions in this study.

Choirs commissioned these works for various reasons: to honor a deceased chorister, to contribute to children's choir literature, and to be part of the literature of an ecumenical choral festival. Five of the directors plan to request new selections primarily because their children get to meet the composer. They said on their questionnaires that they appreciated the opportunity the children have to become "involved in the creative process" and it was an "interesting, enriching experience." They also considered this a means of providing quality literature for their choir and other choirs. When asked whom they would consider when commissioning new music, a varied group of composers was listed on the questionnaire. David Bruner, Rupert Lang, Andre Thomas, Anna Laura Page, Ruth Watson Henderson, Budd Udell, and Rene Clausen were among those considered,

primarily because they "understand the child's voice." "Extremely artistic" and "beautiful, interesting music" were also given as reasons for particular composers. Commissioning and performing music which is aesthetically pleasing helps to introduce children to the pleasure to be found in creating beauty, and contributes to the development of a lifelong consumer of, and participant in, the arts.

Roles of Parents

Every choir contacted for this study used parents in volunteer positions. This free labor was valued and used in a variety of ways: as music librarian, tour manager, chaperones, uniform chairperson, costumers, fund raising chairperson, attendance monitors, assistant director, and on the board of directors. None of these people were paid for his or her work and directors reported in conversation and on the questionnaire that this arrangement has worked out well.

Parents evidently have not presented problems for most of the choirs involved in this study. Only one choir reported on the questionnaire that they had previously had problems with parents in paid positions, although that choir, like the other six, used parents as volunteers. During the author's attendance at a post-concert parent meeting of Choir IV, six positions were filled with elected parent volunteers: president, vice-president, secretary and librarian, treasurer, newsletter editor, and costumer.

Attempts to avoid difficulties have resulted in consent forms or waivers of liability signed by parents. Choir I had a Chorister/Parent Agreement which both parents and singers were required to sign. This form specified attendance and behavior requirements,

as well as a minimum number of volunteer hours required of the parents. All of the boy choirs in Farrell's study required such forms before the boy could sing in the choir (Farrell, 1976, p. 51).

Swears (1985, p. 16) stated that building a successful choral program needs good parental support, and stressed keeping parents informed of goals and plans. She also believed that parents need to be made aware of the teaching and learning opportunities available to the members of the choir. One reason to recruit parents as volunteers is that these people are more likely to be informed of the choir's objectives and opportunities as they work with the staff of the organization.

Sewell (1990, p. 103) believed that parents "play a key role" in the building of a boy choir program. He quoted one of his respondents who said "Parents can 'make' or 'break' an organization." Sewell went on to discuss the many ways in which parents can become involved in the organization, including fund-raising, car pooling, chaperoning and refreshments.

This study and others have shown that parents were involved in their children's choirs. They fulfilled a variety of functions and assumed much of the work that needed to be done, thereby permitting the director to concentrate on the musical goals of the choir's mission.

Recruiting

One choir director stated on the questionnaire that recruiting new members was a problem because "the community has other priorities" and "there are too many activities

for children.” The other choir directors said that they had no trouble securing singers for their organizations because they used a variety of methods to attract their members. Only one choir conductor reported on the questionnaire that he had a waiting list, although that did not mean that recruiting had ceased.

Every choir contacted used word of mouth, relying on singers and their families to encourage others to join the choir, and the program of the choir was designed to be attractive to children. Both classical and popular music was included in the repertoire so that singing was appealing to prospective and current singers.

Local schools were places where new choir members might be found. Four choirs reported on the questionnaire that they tried to attract singers from these areas, including three choirs that sang in the local schools so that potential singers could see and hear them and possibly want to join. Choirs also performed in other venues where potential members could see and hear them.

It was interesting to note that only two of the seven participating choirs used the local churches to recruit members. Most churches have choral programs and would seem to be the ideal place where new singers might be secured. In many churches, children’s choirs are an integral part of the ministry of the church, forming a ready-made pool of potential recruits. When an adult choir is the only choral organization within a church, many members have children at home who might be interested in singing. These families obviously understand the value and joy of singing, since they make the effort required for their own choirs.

It is possible that community choir directors were hesitant to recruit in churches because of the fear of their choirs being labeled as 'religious,' thereby driving away families who did not wish to participate in church related activities. However, if efforts are made to attract children from a variety of venues, including schools, churches, and civic organizations, this criticism would become insignificant. Directors whose choirs rehearse in churches might avoid using the sanctuary or other room in the church where religious symbols are prominent, thereby reducing the perceived influence of the church.

Four respondents reported on the questionnaire that they had few openings in their choirs for new members since they usually retained many former members. Three of these choirs were multi-choir organizations, and many openings for new members in the most advanced choir were filled by children moving up from training choirs.

Publicity in the local media was another way in which new members might be attracted. Six choirs used newspaper advertisements and articles, one choir used a local magazine, four choirs used radio advertisements and interviews, one made use of television advertisements, another attempted to receive local television news coverage and sent faxes to teachers, churches and radio stations. This choir director discussed in an interview how he obtained the names and schools of elementary school music teachers in the county and sent multiple faxes to each teacher, soliciting singers for the choir and advertising impending concerts. Farrell (1976, p. 21, 154) found that the directors of the boy choirs in his study also used radio, television and newspapers in recruiting candidates.

During attendance at choir concerts, it was hard to miss the quality of brochures and concert programs produced by the choirs. Gone is the day of homemade and poorly

photocopied programs, for contemporary publications are full-color and professionally printed. This adds to the air of professionalism in the organization and must surely be an intangible aid in recruiting.

One choir included an enrollment form in its concert programs. Not only did it invite interested parties to provide information for a mailing list, but it asked for information concerning any "young singer who might like to audition."

Directors reported on questionnaires that the hardest groups to attract into the choir were boys, minorities and inner-city children. Four choirs stated that boys are the hardest group for them to recruit, minority children were difficult to attract for four choirs, and one choir stated that inner-city children were among the hardest to recruit.

Farrell (1976, p. 23) found that "affordability and transportation were the only ramifications of the socio-economic spread within their individual programs." Tuition and being "able to get to rehearsals and performances" were problems for the singers in the boy choirs in his study.

In an attempt to enroll children who might not otherwise be able to sing in a choir, four choirs offered scholarships to offset part of the tuition. One choir provided transportation to both concerts and rehearsals, and another held auditions at a site close to the children's homes. The Houston Children's Choir has two choirs in areas of the city where minority children live. The choir pays for a bus to transport these children to dress rehearsals and concerts, with the majority of rehearsals held after the dismissal bell at the neighborhood school. Parents of the minority children are given free tickets, and the

director has found that parental commitment is greatly improved in the second semester after hearing the Christmas concert (S. Roddy, personal communication, July 27, 1998).

Directors need to take advantage of every opportunity to recruit new singers. It is essential for the continuing growth and development of the choirs. They must be aware of the potential of local broadcast and print media for reaching potential singers. They need to be sure that leaders of all possible recruiting venues are on their mailing lists and that personal contacts are made at every possible opportunity.

Funding

Surprisingly, considering the amount of money involved in a children's choir, five choirs reported that funding was not a problem. Only two of the largest choirs in the state, with budgets more than \$100,000, stated that keeping up with the demands of the budget is problematic.

Yearly budgets ranged from approximately \$4,000 to \$147,000 per year for the 1997-98 season. Choir V did not include travel in its \$147,000 figure, and neither did Choir I, which has a \$117,000 yearly budget. Choirs II and VI had similar-sized budgets at \$10,000 and \$12,000, respectively. The director of Choir VII stated in an interview and in an e-mail message that his choir, as a matter of policy, did not disclose budget figures (see Figure 4-4).

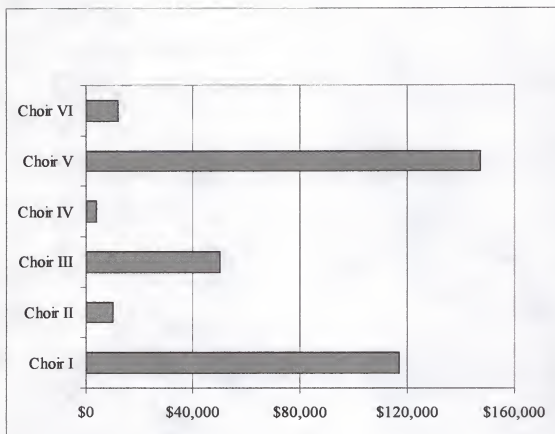


Figure 4-4

CHOIR BUDGETS

Information from the questionnaire responses showed that the largest portion, often approximately 50%, of each choir's budget was reserved for salaries. Choir I devoted 56% of its budget to the salaries for its various personnel, while 50% of the budget for Choir VI was spent in salaries. The treasurer of Choir IV said in an interview that the director was paid \$100 per hour and the accompanist \$60 per hour. Both gave their salaries back to the organization, taking the tax deduction for a charitable donation as their salary.

The next largest portion was spent on music, according to questionnaire responses, and it was usually a much smaller percentage of the whole. Choir I spent approximately

4% of its budget on music, which was about the same as Choir III, with 3%. The largest budget portion spent on music was by Choir II, which devoted 35% to the purchase of new music.

Most choirs spent very little of their budget on uniforms, preferring instead for each singer to supply his or her own. Choir VI used about 10% of its budget on uniforms, more than any other choir.

Insurance is another area which received a small portion of available funds. The greatest percentage was 6%, spent by Choir V. The owners of the buildings in which rehearsals and concerts were held presumably will be responsible for injuries and accidents.

The amount spent for rehearsal and concert facilities ranged from 6% for Choir V to 20% for Choir VI. Choir IV used the director's public school music classroom for rehearsals, and paid no fees. In an interview, the director discussed performing at the public library, local churches and recital rooms at the local university, paying no fees for any of the concert venues.

Choir II was affiliated with, and rehearsed at, a local university. All money was paid to the university and all bills were paid through the university bookkeeper. The director said in an interview that he was seeking to separate the choir from the school in the near future because he had experienced problems in getting the bills paid. His reasoning was that the choir and its expenditures were "such a small cog in the big university wheel" that payments had little priority. The university did cover the insurance

and facilities portion of the budget, but plans were to move the organization to a church which would assume the same responsibilities.

Obviously, the money which goes out must come in. It came mainly from the tuition charged to each singer. As with other aspects of the choir, questionnaire information revealed that tuition varied widely. Choir I charged \$500 per year, followed closely by Choir V with its \$450 per season, and Choir VI with \$50 per month. Much lower on the tuition scale were Choir III, at \$150 per year, Choir II at \$85 per 13-14 week semester, and Choir IV with \$30 per semester. Monthly or semester dues have been extended to a ten month or two semester season, the length of a school year, for the purpose of comparison. (see Figure 4-5).

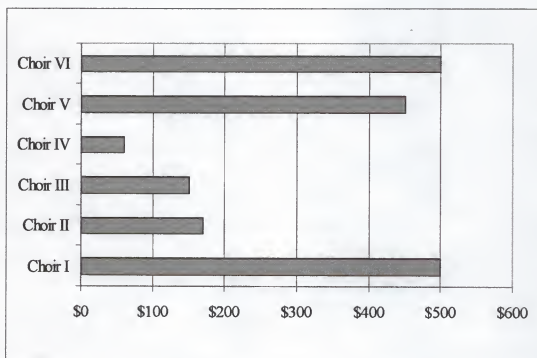


Figure 4-5

ANNUAL TUITION PER STUDENT

When tuition payments were discussed with the treasurer of Choir IV, she said that they usually had very little trouble collecting the money when it was due. One family still owed tuition for spring semester when the year-end concert was over, but other families had paid quickly and in a timely fashion. In addition to tuition, a registration fee was sometimes required. The fee for Choir I was \$130, and was payable in full regardless of the month in which the child joined the choir.

Scholarships and sponsorships are obvious solutions for children who cannot afford the tuition, and these remedies are used by the choirs. The number of scholarships must be limited, however, in order for the choir to have enough money to operate.

Soliciting funds, making presentations and writing grants can demand large amounts of time and effort, so it would seem prudent for choirs to appoint someone to be responsible for this important area. The increased availability of funds would permit more and larger scholarships, and this would allow the choir to grow in size.

Choirs also relied on fundraisers and contributions to meet the budget. One choir director reported that after the choir was featured in a local newspaper article, a reader called the director and offered a gift of \$5,000, which, as the director said, "pretty much takes care of the budget for at least two years."

Another means of raising money was by selling advertisements in the concert programs. Attendance at concerts showed several ways in which choirs encouraged donations. Choir I included self-addressed envelopes in its spring concert program and the conductor urged members of the audience to give money to the choir by using the envelopes and dropping them in the mail. Choir VII listed all contributors in the Christmas

concert program, and introduced the administrative chairperson of the major underwriters to the audience.

Two choirs contracted to sing for weddings and other events to raise money. One director reported in an e-mail message that his choirs also sold recordings of their music-making to help meet the budget. During the author's attendance at a concert by Choir II, parents sold stationery to help pay for a trip to a New York choral festival.

Grants were another way of obtaining funds. Choir I applied for, and received, a grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and the local county Arts Council. Another choir also received money from its local county Arts Council and from the Florida Arts Council. Private corporations and businesses also have active grant programs which were tapped for funds.

An activity that benefited the choir vocally as well as monetarily was undertaken by Choir IV in the summer. The director stated in an interview that she offered a vocal workshop for a few of the singers. Enrollment was limited to the first 11 children who enrolled in the four day class. Each child paid \$40 and received basic vocal instruction. The accompanist and the director were paid for their efforts, and the choir made \$350 profit after the 1997 workshop. The class was popular with the children and plans are made to offer two sessions in Summer, 1998.

An area which seemed to receive scant attention from directors was insurance. Only two choirs reported in the questionnaire responses that they spent any money for this vital protection. If a singer becomes ill or injured while participating in choir activities, the resulting medical and legal bills could devastate the organization and result in financial ruin

for the staff. It only seems sensible for choirs to secure adequate coverage for those involved in volunteer and leadership positions. The chair of the board of directors of Choir II stated during a board meeting that recruiting business people as board members would be difficult if the choir did not have insurance for the board. He remarked that it would be possible for the settlement in a lawsuit to "tap into the company funds" of any business person serving on the board of directors. Welles (1995a, p. 15) also cautioned that "*there are conditions under which Board members can be held personally liable,*" and recommended serious consideration of liability insurance.

Securing a rehearsal hall is another area where money might need to be spent. Free church facilities are possible, but may present problems. The director of Choir II said in a board of directors' meeting that his choir originally rehearsed at his church, and that many of his singers came from his church. He suspected that the "church label" might have "scared people off" and kept some singers from enrolling in his choir.

Novice directors cannot ignore the vital area of money, nor think that it will be easily dealt with. Without funds for music and personnel, the choir will soon cease to exist.

Scheduling

An on-going problem with any endeavor involving children is the scheduling of the activity. Not only are the children involved in many activities, but their parents are often busy and cannot find the time to provide transportation. Three directors said that finding

adequate rehearsal time was difficult, listing parental and child over-involvement as the main reasons.

Scouting was not listed as a conflicting activity, but school, sports, and church organizations were listed on the questionnaire by all directors as presenting obstacles to rehearsals and concerts. Two directors said that consideration also had to be given to dance, drama and music lessons. Because other activities can keep singers away from choir activities, directors must formulate a policy regarding absences early in the life of the choir so that this issue does not become a problem.

To work around these obstacles, directors used a variety of tactics which they listed on the questionnaire. Five permitted a maximum number of absences, while another ignored conflicting events. Three choirs required a parental note after an absence, and two asked their singers to sign a contract which committed them to giving the choir priority. One director met with the coaches and sponsors of other activities and worked out a mutually agreeable calendar for concerts and rehearsals. One choir's rehearsal days were changed from Wednesday to Thursday to avoid the rehearsals of other activities. The director said in an interview that this choir also divides the choral year into two seasons: Fall (which includes the Christmas concert) and Spring (January until May). Children paid tuition for each season separately and were not required to participate in both seasons. The director felt that this gave children the opportunity to explore other interests without slighting any.

Requiring payment of all, or most, of the tuition at the beginning of the choir year may create a natural aid to complete participation in all the rehearsals and concerts of the

group, since parents will not want to waste their money. Those families who have neglected tuition payments may be more liable to become lax about prompt and regular attendance. The Houston Children's Choir has found that requiring parents to be liable for all tuition payments, even if the child stops coming to the choir, has almost stopped drop-out (S. Roddy, personal communication, July 27, 1998).

The larger issue of teaching the child to honor a commitment to the organization also needs to be considered. Those children who are permitted to participate in too many activities, and who attend practices or rehearsals as whim dictates, miss learning all the skills and knowledge available in an activity. They also miss acquiring the valuable life assets of dependability and responsibility. Directors can help children in this area by formulating a policy regarding attendance and participation and adhering to that policy.

Summary

A chart which compares the choirs participating in this study (see Figure 4-6) makes it quickly apparent that each choir is unique in many aspects. Choirs are suited to the needs of their communities and the goals and capabilities of the directors. As the secretary of one director said in an interview after the Christmas concert, "Our Christmas program is not the traditional stand-up-and-sing concert, but we sell out the theater for two nights. The choreography and costumes we use might be frowned on by other directors, but it suits our city. In the spring we do a more traditional program."

The total choral organizations ranged in size from 32 to 200 and most have existed for less than ten years. Concerts ranged from a traditional choral concert to a Christmas

revue with singing, dancing and scenery. Budgets varied widely, from \$12,000 to \$147,000, but in spite of the differences, each choir exists to give children the opportunity to make music and to become a more knowledgeable participant in the arts.

CHOIRS	Approximate area population	Age of the choir in years	Size of the total choral organization	Gender of the director	Highest degree of the director	Yearly budget	Tuition
I	Hillsborough County: 834,000	9	116	F	D. Mus.	\$117,000	\$500 per year
II	Duval County: 673,000	3	56	M	M.A.	\$10,000	\$85 per semester
III	Highlands County: 68,000	2	30	M	Bachelor	\$50,000	\$150 per year
IV	Alachua County: 180,000	3	40	F	M.M.	\$4,000*	\$30 per semester
V	Dade County: 1,900,000	21	140	M	Masters	\$147,000	\$450 per season
VI	Orange, Osceola and Lake Counties: 940,000	3	32	M	Masters	\$12,000	\$50 per month
VII	Escambia County: 263,000	7	200	M	Specialist	**	**

Figure 4-6

*Salaries of director and accompanist are not included because they return their salaries to the choir.

** Choir VII does not disclose budget figures as a matter of policy.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The areas investigated and the procedures used to study them are summarized in this chapter. A summary of the results is also presented, as is a discussion of those findings.

Summary of the Problem and Procedures

Problem

Boy choirs have existed for centuries, providing music for both sacred and secular occasions. In this setting, boy singers have had opportunities to learn singing skills, obtain a general music education, and increase social skills.

Girls have also had the chance to acquire this knowledge in a singing organization. While not as celebrated or as popular as boy choirs, girl choirs have also contributed to the musical life of church and city since Old Testament times.

Both boys and girls have sung together in choirs for many years, although these organizations have traditionally been sponsored by either a school, church, or civic organization. The most recent innovation in these groups is the community-based children's choir, incorporating both boys and girls, drawing membership from the community at large. These choirs are not sponsored by any specific organization.

A study was done by asking community children's choir directors in Florida to participate in a survey and interviews. Since this was the initial work in this field, this manner of seeking information was appropriate (Merriam 1988, p. 27; R. R. Sherman, personal communication, November 17, 1997.).

This investigation targeted several specific areas of community children's choirs. Among them were: vocal pedagogy, vocalises, concert repertoire, parental roles, funding, scheduling, director training, and auditions. These areas were selected as a result of a literature review, conversations and written communications with choir directors.

Methodology

Each of the seven children's community choir directors in Florida who agreed to participate in the study constituted the population for this study. A 132-item questionnaire (Questionnaire B) (see Appendix B) was developed to gather information about seven children's community choirs in Florida. Data were also collected through personal interviews, concert attendance, telephone conversations, workshop attendance and e-mail messages.

Discussion

It would seem that there should be more children's community choirs in a state as heavily populated as Florida. But, while Florida ranked first in the nation in the number of residents 65 years old and over, it was in 47th place in the size of the population 18 years old and under (Bureau of the Census, 1999). Many of the residents no longer had children

at home who would be eligible to sing in a children's choir, and this limited the pool of potential singers.

The 1996 median family income was \$30,641, with 15 percent of the population below the poverty level (Bureau of the Census, 1999). Families with limited budgets may have a difficult time finding the funds necessary for membership in a children's choir, and this will limit the number of singers.

To circumvent these restrictions, community children's choir directors devote a great deal of thought and effort to their organizations. They seek to provide the opportunity for elementary-aged children to experience the joys of music-making with other children from their community.

Characteristics of Membership

Except for Choir V, the choirs with male directors had a higher percentage of boys than did the choirs directed by female directors. This may not have been because of any specific techniques used by these men, but simply because they were male. Seeing men in leadership positions may help boys feel more comfortable in the choir. Women directors may want to put men in highly visible positions in the organization to help attract more boys. Obvious places of responsibility for men are as music librarian, accompanist, president of the parents' group, or leader of section rehearsals. As Swears (1985, p. 16) points out, elementary age children commonly share the values of their parents, so boys who see their fathers, uncles or grandfathers actively participating in the choir will see this as a worthwhile activity.

Phillips (1995) found that when men's voices are provided for boys to emulate, the boys "match pitch much easier." Female directors who use men in their rehearsals may accomplish two things: enroll more boys and make it more comfortable for boys to sing well.

Phillips (1995) found that comparing singing with sports and discussing "the physical conditioning required for both activities" helped to recruit and retain males. He did this to convince boys that singing is a learned behavior and that boys could sing as well as girls.

Increasing the diversity of races and cultures in community children's choirs is a challenging task. One frustration directors cited in their questionnaire responses was the lack of commitment by low income parents, and this obviously makes recruiting difficult. A change of attitude on the part of families will be needed before more children can be enrolled, and this is a slow process that often takes many years to achieve. Performing and rehearsing in locales easily accessible to families without transportation, where they can see and hear the choir, and can become personally acquainted with the leadership, may be on way of accomplishing this. Radical and innovative strategies need to be developed to break patterns of behavior in order for parents to involve their children in choral programs.

In a state as racially and culturally diverse as Florida, it would seem that having a more diverse choir membership would be easy. Directors have apparently been so focused on the music-making that they have not taken the time to expand the recruiting efforts into minority populations. One solution would be to appoint a membership chairperson whose

mission is to actively recruit singers from all areas of the community and all segments of the population. Another way of reaching minority populations might be to perform and rehearse in locales easily accessible to families without transportation, where they can see and hear the choir, and can become personally acquainted with the leadership. Radical and innovative strategies need to be developed to break patterns of behavior in order for parents to involve their children in choral programs

The discretionary budget funds of choirs which might be used to cover the costs for low income children are usually scarce, and the obvious solution of providing scholarships has been tried, but is not always successful, possibly because parents do not feel like a part of the organization. One solution might be to require a minimum number of volunteer hours from parents whose child receives scholarship money. Tasks which can be done at home, such as stuffing envelopes, sewing costumes or making telephone calls, are ideal for parents who have limited transportation or who work late afternoon or evening hours. This would ease the burden of the director, bring the minority parents in closer contact with the choir staff and enable them to become acquainted with each other, and allow parents to have a deeper understanding of the choir's mission, thereby increasing their commitment.

Another answer to the problem of scarce funds might be to ask local churches, businesses or civic groups to sponsor a child or to provide transportation. Without actively seeking to change family attitudes and meet the need for transportation and money, low income and minority children will continue to be excluded.

Time

Much time is required from the adults involved in this endeavor, and this may be the reason that all choirs do not succeed, or that more communities do not have a choir. Bartle stressed this point by saying that directors cannot be "nine to five, Monday to Friday" people (1988, p. 116). She went on to say "Don't think you're going to have a successful children's choir without an extraordinary amount of dedication" (1988, p. 116). One of Sewell's (1990, p. 139) respondents stated: "Even the smallest boychoir will become a full time job. Be prepared to work long hours for results."

Of the original 17 choirs which were found in Florida, one was never formally constituted because the director found that she had too many other commitments, and three others ceased to exist for the same reason. Nearly one quarter of the choirs no longer functioned because of the enormous amount of time that was required to do all that was needed by a developing organization. One director stated in an interview that she feared her choir was suffering because she could not devote more time to it. She was trying to persuade her board of directors to increase her salary so that she could stop some of the outside activities in which she was engaged, and divide her time solely between the choir and her teaching.

Directors, both present and potential, apparently greatly underestimate how much time is required to direct a children's choir. Choirs demand a great deal of time and resources in recruiting, searching for literature, rehearsal, board meetings, auditions, and concerts. While none of the directors interviewed spent a great deal of time or effort advertising the choir before the inaugural rehearsal, they expended much energy to keep

the group alive. Those who are contemplating a children's choir need to seriously consider the demands on their time before inaugurating a program.

Location

In addition to the amount of time available, location is another issue that needs to be considered before beginning a choir. Of the seven choirs that participated in this study, all were from communities which have institutions of higher learning, either community colleges or universities. One city had one community college, but the other areas had multiple opportunities for post-secondary study. All of the communities also had an orchestra and/or a ballet company either in the city or in the neighboring county (Marth, 1998). The 1990 census figures for each county in which a choir was located showed that the smallest population from which a choir drew its membership was approximately 68,000, while one choir had a population base of almost two million people (Marth, 1998).

These figures argue that a potential choir location needs to have a substantial population that is educated and supports the arts. Parents with a low level of education may be unlikely to understand the benefits that a choir can provide to the child and would be unwilling to supply the substantial amounts of time and money that a children's choir demands.

With the many opportunities available to children, no director can expect that every child in a community will give up sports or scouting activities to sing in the choir. Just as every child will not want to play soccer, so every child will not want to sing. The

population of the community needs to be large enough for there to be an adequate number of singers who are more interested in singing than in swimming or dancing.

Children's Voices

While each of the seven directors in this study were trained in music, they studied different aspects of music. No director said that emphasis had been given to children's singing in undergraduate work, which is what Phillips (1985a, 1985b) found, and every director said that experience with the child voice or with a children's choir would have been valuable training for the work they are now doing. Seeing what can be done would not only help to insure a better all-round quality of work, but has the potential of directing people into this line of work.

While a general music education is invaluable for children's choral work, the singing of young children demands knowledge which is specific to that age. General vocal techniques are applicable to any age or voice, but repertoire, range, tone quality, and dynamic level need to be carefully addressed if good vocal health is to be encouraged.

Since directors frequently use modeling to teach children how to sing, schools of music need to be sure that their graduates know how to sing correctly. This applies to all music majors, whatever their concentration. Singing is perhaps the predominant music activity for children, and to teach it incorrectly is unnecessary and wrong.

As Lindeman (1997) said, "if students . . . are to master the knowledge and skills called for in all the music standards, their teachers will need to be prepared to help them." To do this, they need adequate instruction on the child voice in schools of music.

Differences From School Choirs

Many school music teachers use little sacred music because of the fear of lawsuits or of parental complaints. Community directors need to be conscious and respectful of the different beliefs in the choir, but they have more freedom to teach sacred music. It can be assumed that parents would be aware of the content of the repertoire of the organization before permitting the child to enroll. Since the organization is privately funded, those families which are offended can withdraw their membership.

Schools are more restricted in the time that can be afforded for choir rehearsal, so music involving difficulties such as foreign languages might be forgone in favor of repertoire which needs less time to teach. Extracurricular choirs can have longer and more frequent rehearsal time and possibly the opportunity for section rehearsals in which to accomplish these tasks.

Touring is also more restricted in a school setting because of the necessity for the singers to meet class attendance requirements. Community choirs can use vacation time for travel, avoiding the problems that come with missed classes and undone assignments.

Both school music programs and community choirs seek the best possible music experiences for their singers. However, the programs which exist outside the schools have more freedom in the music they use, in scheduling their rehearsals and concerts and in their touring schedules.

Encouraging the Growth of Choirs

Elementary music method classes, required by many music education schools, can also help in encouraging the growth of choirs. In their questionnaire responses, directors listed ways in which their undergraduate studies could have been of benefit, including observations and "hands-on" experiences with children's choirs. They also would like to have had training in vocal techniques for children. All of these areas would fit into the methods class curriculum.

Many children's choirs travel, and can be engaged for concerts by schools of music. Performances by both touring and local groups need to be promoted more heavily at places where college personnel will be encouraged to attend. This would enable both faculty and students to hear the unique sounds produced by young singers.

A problem which might be harder to correct is the difficulty of finding recordings of children's choirs. While some very good choirs make recordings, they are not often stocked in stores, nor are they listed in the more widely distributed music education catalogues. They can be obtained by special order, but the consumer must know that they exist in order for this to be done. If recordings were more readily available, this would enable consumers to become more familiar with the sound of singing children.

The best way to encourage the growth in the size and number of children's choir is to help music education students, parents, and the general public to hear them. Concerts and recordings are certainly good ways to do this.

Recommendations and Implications

For Directors

Those wishing to start a community children's choir need to realize that this is not a venture to be entered into lightly. Such an organization will consume much time, energy and money. It will also require these valuable assets from the singers and their parents.

Before beginning a choir, a realistic budget should be written. This will allow adequate money to be collected in registration fees and tuition. It will give the director an idea of how much money will be needed in grants and donations to purchase equipment and supplies such as risers or folders. Writing applications for grants and requesting donations will be easier if the director has a clear idea of what materials are needed and how much money is needed for their purchase.

Directors need to plan for parental involvement. There are many tasks which need to be accomplished if a choir is to run smoothly, and one person cannot possibly do them all. If provision is made for parent volunteers, the work will be spread more evenly and parents will feel that they have a part in their child's activity.

Just as plans need to be made for parents, so recruiting strategies need to be formulated before the choir begins. Directors need to ascertain where potential singers may be found and how best to reach them and their parents; they need to cultivate associations with music teachers and church choir directors who can recommend singers; and they need to select literature that will appeal to children.

If the director is female, males should have prominent and visible positions in the organization so that boys will feel comfortable. Men can distribute music, collect fees, or lead section rehearsals.

Just as recruiting boys needs to be planned for, minority and disadvantaged children's needs should be included in initial planning. Rehearsal location, scholarships, transportation and the relationship between minority parents and choir leadership are factors in enlisting and retaining low income and minority singers.

Those contemplating directing a children's choir would do well to talk to experienced directors and determine the choirs that are considered to be of high quality, then order the recordings and attend the concerts of these groups. This will help the director form an idea of his or her own ideal sound.

For Music Teacher Preparation Programs

Colleges and universities can help in the establishment of children's choirs by teaching the skills that directors will need. Potential directors need to know basic singing techniques, common vocal problems they will encounter, the best way to correct singing difficulties, and how to select a repertoire suitable for children's interests and abilities. These skills can be incorporated into music methods courses and will not take an inordinate amount of time. The ability to match pitch might be a prerequisite for passing the course.

Music departments might consider scheduling concerts by children's choirs. This exposes the faculty and students to the kind of music making that young singers can do, and may encourage a listener to begin a choir.

If music departments give their students the basic skills necessary for directing a children's choir, and if directors of new choirs prepare adequately for their groups, the children's choir movement can grow. Many more children will be able to experience the joys of making music with other youngsters from their community.

Directions for Future Research

Within the context of the findings and conclusions drawn from the seven choirs in this study, the following recommendations for future study are made:

1. Future research might investigate those choirs that are currently in existence and those which are formed after this time to determine if the mortality rate remains constant, if the reasons for disbanding the choirs are consistent with these findings, and what remedial steps have been taken by long-lived choirs to remedy the situation.

2. One director involved in this study reported that one of her reasons for forming a choir was to give home-schooled children the opportunity for a group musical experience. This raises the question of how many home-schooled children are in community choirs. It would also be of interest to know whether parents or directors initiate the contact. These children are in a minority, but they certainly are a pool of potential singers which may be absent in the usual places of recruitment.

3. The attitudes of the children toward the choir can be studied. When directors know why children join the choir and what makes the choir attractive to them, they can shape the program into one which might attract other children.

Also of interest is whether singers belong to more than one choir, possibly one at church and/or at school. If they already belong to one choir, further investigation might be made into the reasons for joining another group.

4. The attitudes of parents toward the choir can be studied. Recruiting efforts could be more usefully directed if directors knew how parents become aware of choirs and why they think that this is a worthwhile expenditure of time and money.

5. How participation in a children's choir affects both future vocational and avocational choices is a subject which would be worth studying. It would be useful to know how many children enroll in senior high music ensembles, major in music, participate in adult community or church groups, or are regular attendees at symphony concerts as a result of membership in a children's choir. This information could provide a basis for soliciting support from groups which ultimately benefit from early beginnings in music.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE A AND RELATED MATERIAL



College of Fine Arts
Department of Music

130 Music Building
PO Box 117900
Gainesville, FL 32611-7900
(352) 392-0223 Fax (352) 392-0461

Date

Name
Address
City, State

Dear :

I am a doctoral student at the University of Florida, studying community children's choirs and areas of concern for directors of these choirs. For the purposes of my study, I am defining community children's choirs as those choirs which are composed of both boys and girls, and whose membership is drawn from an area at large, rather than exclusively from a school, church or other formal organization.

I would appreciate your help with this study. Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope. Additional pages may be used, if necessary.

Your name will not be used without your prior permission. Should it prove essential to quote you, you will be given the opportunity to review the material and be sure it is accurate.

Thank you for any information you can provide.

Sincerely,

Mary Jeanette Howle

Address
Telephone number
E-mail address

REMINDER POST CARD

Dear

A questionnaire concerning children's community choirs was recently mailed to you. It asked for information needed for a study at the University of Florida. Your input has not been received and is eagerly anticipated.

If the original questionnaire has been misplaced, please contact me for another copy.

Thank you,

Mary Jeanette Howle

Address

Telephone Number

E-mail address



College of Fine Arts
Department of Music

130 Music Building
PO Box 117900
Gainesville, FL 32611-7900
(352) 392-0223 Fax (352) 392-0461

Date

Name
Address
City, State

Dear :

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A questionnaire which solicited information for this study was recently mailed to you. Since it does not seem to have been returned, I am sending you a second copy because your help would be greatly appreciated. Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope. Additional pages may be used, if necessary.

Your name will not be used without your prior permission. Should it prove essential to quote you, you will be given the opportunity to review the material and be sure it is accurate.

Thank you for any information you can provide.

Sincerely,

Mary Jeanette Howle

Address
Telephone number
E-mail address

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIR QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Address (H) _____

(W) _____

Phone (H) _____

(W) _____

E-mail _____

Do you currently direct a community children's choir?

What is the name of your choir?

How long have you directed this choir?

To study community children's choirs, a broad base of participants is needed. Please list those directors whose work you admire, and, if possible, their addresses and telephone numbers.

Directors of community children's choirs have mentioned recruitment of singers and funding as problem areas. As a director of community children's choirs, what are the areas which cause concern for you? If you have found full or partial solutions to these problems, please include these, also.

If you know of any children's community choirs, please provide the name of the choir, the director, and, if possible, the address of the director.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE B AND RELATED MATERIAL

QUESTIONNAIRE CRITIQUE FORM

Please rate this questionnaire on the following: (Circle your answers)

1. The length of the questionnaire was

too short

too long

just right

2. The directions were

clear

unclear

3. The questions were

relevant to topic

irrelevant to topic

poorly written

4. Which questions were unclear? (Please list the question number.)

Why?

5. Are there any questions that you would eliminate?

yes

no

If 'yes,' list the number(s) and explain why for each. (Use the other side of the paper if necessary.)

6. Are there any questions that should be added?

yes

no

If 'yes,' please explain. Use the other side of the paper if necessary.

7. Was there enough room to write your answers?

yes no

8. What was your general reaction to filling out this questionnaire?

interested mildly interested a waste of time

9. Did the cover letter adequately explain the study and what you were expected to do?

yes somewhat no (please explain)

10. Approximately how many minutes did it take you to fill out this questionnaire?

11. Was the questionnaire eye-appealing?

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this critique with your questionnaire.

Name _____



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Department of Music

130 Music Building
PO Box 117900
Gainesville, FL 32611-7900
(352) 392-0223 Fax (352) 392-0461

Date

Name
Address
City, State

Dear :

Community children's choirs seem to be increasing in popularity and number in recent years, but there seems to be little information about any choirs of this kind which are located in Florida. I am conducting a doctoral research program at the University of Florida which will study community children's choirs in this state and I am asking for your assistance.

Your help is sought so that information may be gathered about the function of the choir in the community, how choirs are organized, and the theories and practices of the conductors. A better understanding of how choirs serve both their membership and their locale will enable directors to be more specific in creating programs that will attract audiences and singers.

In order to conduct this study, I am asking that you complete a questionnaire which will be sent to you upon receipt of this signed consent. The questionnaire should take less than an hour to complete. A follow-up interview may be conducted by telephone, e-mail or in person. Handwritten notes and/or cassette recordings of the interviews will be kept. You will be free to refuse to answer any question.

Your name will be separated from the questionnaire to protect your privacy and replaced with a code number. There will be no references to specific directors or choirs in the completed study.

Enclosed you will find another copy of this letter. Please indicate whether or not you are willing to participate in this study on one of the copies, sign it, and return it in the envelope provided. The second copy you may keep for your records.

I value your knowledge and anticipate your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Mary Jeanette Howle
Address
Telephone number

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant's signature

Date

Principal investigator

Date

I have read the procedure described above. I DO NOT wish to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this study, please sign below.

Signature

REMINDER POST CARD

Dear

You recently received a letter from me which asked you to participate in a study of Florida's community children's choirs. I have not received your signed consent form, which was enclosed in that letter.

Please mail the signed consent form as soon as possible so that your experience and knowledge may be included in this study.

If you need another form, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Mary Jeanette Howle

Address

Telephone number

E-mail address



College of Fine Arts
Department of Music

130 Music Building
PO Box 117900
Gainesville, FL 32611-7900
(352) 392-0223 Fax (352) 392-0461

Date

Name
Address
City, State

Dear :

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This signed agreement which was included in that letter has not yet been received. Your help is very important and is being sought so that information may be gathered about the function of the choir in the community, how choirs are organized, and the theories and practices of the conductors. A better understanding of how choirs serve both their membership and their locale will enable directors to be more specific in creating programs that will attract audiences and singers.

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Date

Name
Address
City, State

Dear :

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study which is designed to investigate the community children's choir in Florida. Your knowledge and experience will contribute a great deal to the total picture of the work being done with children's voices.

The enclosed questionnaire has been designed for obtaining the necessary data while requiring a minimum of time for completion. Please check or fill in the appropriate answers on the survey form. And additional comments you may have are welcome. Please feel free to use the backs of the pages or use additional pages as needed.

Upon receipt of your questionnaire, your name will be separated from the questionnaire and replaced with a code number to protect your privacy. There will be no references to specific directors or choirs. Any responses which are cited in the study will be identified solely by question number or a fictitious designation. Names and addresses are requested on the questionnaire only for the purpose of following up on incomplete or unclear information at a later date. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer.

Please return the questionnaire to me as soon as you are finished. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included for your convenience. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

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Address
Telephone number
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A second copy of the questionnaire is enclosed is enclosed, should the first copy have been mis-placed. It has been designed for obtaining the necessary data while requiring a minimum of time for completion. Please check or fill in the appropriate answers on the survey form, and additional comments you may have are welcome. Please feel free to use the backs of the pages or use additional pages as needed.

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Sincerely,

Mary Jeanette Howle
Address
Telephone number
E-mail address

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIR
DIRECTORS**

Name _____

Title _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone(____) _____

E-mail address _____

Name of Choir _____

Address of Choir _____

Rehearsal location _____

Please return to: Mary Jeanette Howle

Address

Telephone Number

E-mail address

Questionnaire for Community Children's Choir Directors

Please answer the following questions. Additional paper, or the back of these pages, may be used if needed. If there is more than one choir in your organization, please consider only the senior, or concert, choir when answering these questions.

A. DIRECTOR'S BACKGROUND

1. What is your academic training?

- ☐ a. Baccalaureate degree
- ☐ b. Masters degree
- ☐ c. Specialist or advanced certificate
- ☐ d. Doctorate
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

2. Where did you receive your degree(s)?

3. What field is your degree in?

4. What was your performance area as an undergraduate?

5. Have you directed other community children's choirs?

6. If 'yes,' please give the name(s) and location(s) of your choir(s).

7. How long did you direct each choir?

8. Where have your other community children's choirs been located?

9. What experiences in your undergraduate studies HELPED prepare you for this directing experience?

10. What experiences WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL in your undergraduate studies to prepare you for this directing experience?

11. What workshops, articles and/or clinics WOULD HELP you lead your choir?

B. CHOIR HISTORY

12. How long has your choir been in existence?

- ☐ a. one to five years
- ☐ b. six to ten years
- ☐ c. eleven to twenty years
- ☐ d. twenty-one or more years

13. How long have you directed this choir?

14. Did you start this choir?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. If you did not start this choir, who did?

16. Why was your choir formed?

- ☐ a. No school music program
- ☐ b. A school music program exists, but it is inadequate
- ☐ c. Requested by children
- ☐ d. Requested by parents
- ☐ e. Director wanted to work with a children's choir
- ☐ f. Other; please specify _____

C. MEMBERSHIP

17. How many singers are in your choir?

18. How many BOYS are in your choir?

19. How many GIRLS are in your choir?

20. Please list the number of singers who are

- ☐ a. Black
- ☐ b. Hispanic
- ☐ c. White
- ☐ d. Asian
- ☐ e. Indian
- ☐ f. Other; please specify _____

21. Did you intend for the membership of the choir to reflect the characteristics of your community in terms of

a. Race

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

b. Socio-economic groups

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

c. Income

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

d. Ethnic background

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22. Why or why not?

23. Have you been able to recruit a proportionate sample from each segment of your community?

a. Race

☐ Yes

☐ No

b. Socio-economic groups

☐ Yes

☐ No

c. Income

☐ Yes

☐ No

d. Ethnic background

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. Why or why not?

D. ORGANIZATION

25. How many persons do you have on your musical staff?

26. What positions do they fill?

27. Do you have student officers in your choir(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

28. If 'no,' why not?

29. If 'yes' to #27, what offices do students fill? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ a. President
- ☐ b. Vice-president
- ☐ c. Librarians
- ☐ d. Section leaders
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

E. VOCAL TRAINING

30. Where did you learn how to teach children to sing? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Undergraduate school
- ☐ b. Graduate school
- ☐ c. Workshops
- ☐ d. Books
- ☐ e. Self-study
- ☐ f. Professional journals
- ☐ g. Conversations with colleagues
- ☐ h. Other; please specify _____

31. Which PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS do you subscribe to?

32. Which PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS have been the most help to you in learning about children's singing?

33. Which BOOKS have been the most help to you in learning about children's singing?

34. Which WORKSHOPS or CLINICIANS have the most help to you in learning about children's singing?

35. Do you have a mental concept of your ideal children's choir sound?

☐ Yes

☐ No

36. If 'no,' how do you evaluate the sound of your choir?

37. If 'yes' to question #35, please describe your ideal children's choir sound.

38. How do you think of vocal registers?

☐ a. Head voice-chest voice (registers)

☐ b. Upper, middle and lower voice (registers)

☐ c. Two distinct registers

☐ d. Three distinct registers

☐ e. One equalized register

☐ f. Other; please specify _____

39. How do you teach registers? Please check all that apply.

☐ a. Modeling

☐ b. Having the children listen to recordings of other children's choirs with the desired sound

☐ c. Praise children who are producing the desired sound

☐ d. Meet privately with children who are not singing in the desired register

☐ e. Other; please specify _____

40. In respect to vibrato, which best describes your thinking?

- ☐ a. Allow vibrato to develop with maturity
- ☐ b. Inject vibrato into the voice
- ☐ c. Restrict vibrato; use a straight tone
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

41. Do you use pet phrases, imagery, and/or physical examples as you teach your singers?
If you do, what are they?

42. Do you think that posture and breathing are directly related?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

43. Why or why not?

44. Do you use specific drills for breathing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

45. Why or why not?

46. Do you use specific drills for posture development?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

47. Why or why not?

48. How do you approach the development of vocal technique?

- ☐ a. Through exercises designed to build vocal technique
- ☐ b. Through a set of exercises based on a given musical passage
- ☐ c. Through the music being studied
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

49. Why do you develop vocal technique in this way?

50. In what environment do you teach vocal technique?

- ☐ a. Private lessons
- ☐ b. Small group lessons
- ☐ c. Regular rehearsals
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

F. VOCALISES

51. Do you include vocal warm-ups in rehearsal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

52. Why or why not?

If 'no,' skip to Section G.

53. Do you vocally warm-up with vocal exercises or with drills based on problem areas in the music you are singing?

- ☐ a. Vocal exercises
- ☐ b. Drills based on problem areas in the music
- ☐ c. Both of the above
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

54. Do you isolate problems in the music and seek to correct them in vocal warm-ups?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

55. Why or why not?

56. If you work on problems during warm-up, do you usually work on (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Rhythm
- ☐ b. Melody
- ☐ c. Pitch
- ☐ d. Harmony
- ☐ e. Dynamics
- ☐ f. Tempo
- ☐ g. Style
- ☐ h. Articulation
- ☐ i. Other; please specify _____

G. AUDITIONS

57. Do you administer a vocal audition for admittance into your program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

58. If you do not audition singers, why not?

- ☐ a. Lack of time
- ☐ b. It is unnecessary
- ☐ c. It is too stressful for the child
- ☐ d. The results make no difference, since I take every child
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

59. If you administer a vocal audition, which of these items do you evaluate in an entrance audition? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Solo song
- ☐ b. Solo sight-reading
- ☐ c. Tonal strength
- ☐ d. Vocal timbre
- ☐ e. Pitch pattern matching
- ☐ f. Rhythmic pattern matching
- ☐ g. Physical health
- ☐ h. The ability to read language
- ☐ i. Social Skills
- ☐ j. Desire to sing in the choir
- ☐ k. Self-reliance
- ☐ l. Other; please specify _____

60. How do you evaluate the entrance audition?

- ☐ a. Subjective impression of all factors
- ☐ b. Objective evaluation of all factors
- ☐ c. Jury/panel of judges
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

61. Do you admit singers who cannot match pitch?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

62. Why or why not?

63. If you admit non-pitch matching singers, how do you help them learn to match pitch?

- ☐ a. Private lessons
- ☐ b. Small group instruction
- ☐ c. Placement in training choir
- ☐ d. Seated between strong singers
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

H. HOW TRAINING CHOIRS ARE USED

64. Do all of your choir children sing in one choir?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

65. Why or why not?

66. If 'no' to #64, how many choirs do you have in your organization?

67. If 'no' to #64, how many children sing in each choir?

- ☐ a. Concert choir
- ☐ b. Training choir
- ☐ c. Touring choir
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

68. If you have a training choir, how long must a child remain in such a group?

- ☐ a. One year
- ☐ b. Until the child demonstrates his ability to move to a higher level
- ☐ c. When an opening occurs on a higher level
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

69. Do you direct the training choir(s)?

70. If you do not direct the training choir, who does?

I. MUSIC EDUCATION

71. Do you use the choral literature to teach music concepts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

72. Why or why not?

73. If 'yes' to #71, which concepts do you find EASIEST to teach with your choral literature?

- ☐ a. Tempo
- ☐ b. Dynamics
- ☐ c. Form
- ☐ d. Rhythm
- ☐ e. Style
- ☐ f. Melody
- ☐ g. Tone color
- ☐ h. Harmony
- ☐ i. Texture

74. If 'yes' to #71, which concepts do you find HARDEST to teach with your choral literature?

- ☐ a. Tempo
- ☐ b. Dynamics
- ☐ c. Form
- ☐ d. Rhythm
- ☐ e. Style
- ☐ f. Melody
- ☐ g. Tone color
- ☐ h. Harmony
- ☐ i. Texture

75. Do you look for choral literature that will help you teach specific music concepts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

76. Why or why not?

77. Do you use learning activities other than singing to teach music concepts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

78. Why or why not?

79. What type(s) of learning activities do you use to teach music concepts? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Moving
- ☐ b. Playing instruments
- ☐ c. Listening
- ☐ d. Sight reading
- ☐ e. Composing
- ☐ f. Singing

80. Do you attempt to teach music reading by using the choral literature?

_____ Yes

_____ No

81. Why or why not?

J. CONCERT REPERTOIRE

82. Do you use a published repertoire list, such as one from the American Choral Directors Association or the Music Educators National Conference, as a source for selecting music?

83. What list do you prefer to use?

84. Why do you prefer that list?

_____ a. I have found useable music on that list in the past

_____ b. I have not seen any other list

_____ c. My local music store can easily order from that list

_____ d. It was recommended by a colleague

_____ e. Other; please specify _____

85. Do you look for choral literature that will help you correct VOCAL problems in your choir?

_____ Yes

_____ No

86. Why or why not?

87. Do you look for choral literature that will help you correct DICTION problems in your choir?

_____ Yes

_____ No

88. Why or why not?

89. Please list your 10 favorite selections for children's choirs, including title and composer.

90. What vocal range do you look for when selecting music?

91. Has your choir ever commissioned a work?

92. Please provide the titles and composers of any commissioned works.

93. Why did you commission work(s) from this/these composers?

94. Would you commission another work?

95. Why or why not?

96. From whom would you commission a work?

97. Why would you select that composer?

K. THE ROLE OF PARENTS

98. Do parents fill any VOLUNTEER positions in your choir(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

99. What positions do they fill?

100. Do parents fill any PAID positions in your choir(s)?

101. What positions do they fill?

102. If parents do not fill any positions, why not?

- ☐ a. Lack of qualified parents
- ☐ b. Parents are qualified, but will not serve
- ☐ c. We have had problems in the past with parents on the staff
- ☐ d. Other; please specify _____

L. RECRUITING MEMBERS

103. Is recruiting new members a problem for you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

104. If 'no' to #103, why do you feel that it is NOT a problem? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ a. We have a waiting list
- ☐ b. Our parents and members encourage others to join
- ☐ c. We do extensive publicity in local media. Please check the type of publications you use.
 - ☐ a. Newspaper
 - ☐ b. Billboards
 - ☐ c. Local magazines
 - ☐ d. Radio ads
 - ☐ e. TV ads
 - ☐ f. Posters
- ☐ d. Our group performs in places where potential members see us and want to join
- ☐ e. We have formed a network with local CHURCHES who send us singers
- ☐ f. We have formed a network with local SCHOOLS who send us singers
- ☐ g. We retain a large percentage of our members so that there are few openings for new singers
- ☐ h. We attempt to have an exciting program that will attract children
- ☐ i. We sing a repertoire that includes both classical and popular music to make the choir more exciting
- ☐ j. We sing in the local schools so that children can see us and will want to join

105. If 'yes' to #103, why do you feel that recruiting is a problem?

- ☐ a. Our community has other priorities
- ☐ b. We are a new choir and have not had much exposure to the community
- ☐ c. We have a limited concert schedule and do not have much exposure to the community
- ☐ d. Our society does not encourage singing
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

106. The hardest group for us to recruit is

- ☐ a. Boys
- ☐ b. Girls
- ☐ c. Minorities
- ☐ d. Inner city children

107. We try to include hard-to-enroll children by

- ☐ a. Holding auditions in their school
- ☐ b. Holding auditions close to their homes
- ☐ c. Providing scholarships
- ☐ d. Providing transportation to rehearsals and concerts
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

M. FUNDING

108. Funding is a problem for this choir.

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No

109. If funding is not a problem, why not?

- ☐ a. We have a dependable group of sponsors.
- ☐ b. Our usual program of concerts and fund-raisers provides enough money to meet our needs.
- ☐ c. The tuition we charge is adequate for our needs.
- ☐ d. A combination of tuition, concerts and fund-raisers provides the money we need.
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

110. We have a yearly budget of _____.

111. Approximately what percentage of your budget is spent on

- ☐ a. Salaries
- ☐ b. Music
- ☐ c. Travel
- ☐ d. Insurance
- ☐ e. Facilities for rehearsal and concerts
- ☐ f. Uniforms
- ☐ g. Miscellaneous materials

112. To raise money to meet the needs of this choir, we

- ☐ a. Have fundraisers
- ☐ b. Solicit contributions
- ☐ c. Apply for grants
- ☐ d. Charge tuition
- ☐ e. Sell program ads
- ☐ f. Sell recordings
- ☐ g. Sell t-shirts
- ☐ h. Sell merchandise
- ☐ i. Sing for weddings, parties or other contracted events

113. If you receive grants or funds from organizations or charities, please list those organizations.

114. We charge _____ tuition per _____.

N. COMMITMENT

115. Finding adequate rehearsal time is difficult.

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No

116. Adequate rehearsal time is difficult to find because

- ☐ a. Children are involved in other activities
- ☐ b. Parents are too busy to bring them
- ☐ c. Rehearsal space is not available
- ☐ d. A year-round school calendar makes it difficult to find days when all the children are not in school.
- ☐ e. Other; please specify _____

117. Other children's activities which conflict with choir are

- ☐ a. Sports
- ☐ b. Civic organizations
- ☐ c. Scouting
- ☐ d. School activities
- ☐ e. Church activities
- ☐ f. Other; please specify _____

118. What do you do to counteract conflicting activities?

- ☐ a. Ignore them
- ☐ b. Try to schedule REHEARSALS around other activities
- ☐ c. Try to schedule CONCERTS around other activities
- ☐ d. Require singers to sign a contract which commits them to give the choir priority
- ☐ e. Permit a maximum number of absences
- ☐ f. Require a parent note for each absence
- ☐ g. Acquire calendars from other major activities before scheduling choir rehearsals and concerts
- ☐ h. Only admit singers who do not participate in other activities
- ☐ i. Meet with coaches and sponsors of other area activities and work out a mutually agreeable calendar
- ☐ j. Other; please specify _____

O. PRINTED MATERIAL

If you are able to provide copies of any or all of the following material, they would be greatly appreciated.

- 119. Drills or exercises used to teach pitch matching.
- 120. Drills or exercises used to teach breathing.
- 121. Drills or exercises used for posture development.
- 122. An audition form, if you use one.
- 123. Copies of the last 5 concert programs which your choir has given.
- 124. A brochure or letter which tells parents and children what is expected of them.

P. GENERAL INFORMATION

125. May I visit a rehearsal of your choir?

☐ Yes

☐ No

126. If 'yes' to #125, when do you rehearse?

127. Do you rehearse year-round?

☐ Yes

☐ No

128. If not, what is your season?

129. Are you planning a concert in the near future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

130. When?

131. May I call you to obtain any additional information for this study?

☐ Yes

☐ No

132. When would be the best time to call you?

APPENDIX C

REPertoire

REPERTOIRE

Directors who participated in this study were asked to list their favorite selections. Three directors cited *Bist du bei Mir*. Dodi Li, Sound the Trumpet and Angel's Carol each received two citations.

<i>And A Little Child Shall Lead Them</i>	Pote	3 part (Cantata)	Hope Publishing Co.
<i>An Die Musik</i>	Schubert	Unison	European American Music Corp.
<i>Angel's Carol</i>	Rutter	2 part	Hinshaw Music, Inc.
<i>Bashana Haba'a</i>	Hirsch/Leek	2 part	Posthorn Press
<i>Bed in Summer</i>	Smith	Unison	Plymouth Music Co.
<i>Benedictus</i>	Schubert/Telfer	2 part	Neil A. Kjos Music Co.
<i>Bist du bei Mir</i>	Bach	Unison	Boosey & Hawkes Inc.
<i>Cantate Domino</i>	Lang/ Rao	3 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Carol of the Bells</i>	Leontovich/Wilhousky	3 part	Carl Fischer, Inc.
<i>Dodi Li</i>	Chen/Rao	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Domine Deus</i>	Bach	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Dormi, Dormi</i>	Italian Carol/Goetze	Unison	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Feel Good</i>	Gospel song/Baker and Elliott	3 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Gloria</i>	Leavitt	2 part	Warner Brothers Music Publisher

<i>Go Where I Send Thee</i>	Gospel Spiritual/Caldwell and Ivory	3 part	Earthsongs
<i>Hine Ma Tov</i>	Naplan	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>I'm Laughing and Shouting</i> (from <i>Cantata No. 15</i>)	Bach/Rao	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Inflammatius et Ascensus</i> (included in <i>Pergolesi Suite</i>)	Pergolesi	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>I Sing a Song of the Saints of God</i>	Hopkins/Taylor	Unison or 3 part	Unpublished manuscript
<i>J'entends le moulin</i>	Patriquin	2 part	Earthsongs
<i>Jerusalem</i>	Perry	Unison	Warner Bros.
<i>*Jubilate Deo</i>	Practorious	2, 3, or 4 part round	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>The Lord Bless You and Keep You</i>	Rutter	2 part	Hinshaw Music, Inc.
<i>My Country</i> (25 minute program)	Jacobs/Wilson	2 part	Hope Publishing Co.
<i>Niska Banja</i>	Serbian Gypsy Folksong/Page	4 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Oliver Cromwell</i>	Britten	Unison	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>The Path to the Moon</i>	Thiman	Unison	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Pie Jesu (from Requiem)</i>	Faure/Stultz	Unison	Morningstar Music

<i>She's Like the Swallow</i>	Doloff	Unison	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>Song for the Mira</i>	MacGillivray/Calvert	3 part	Warner Brothers
<i>Sound the Trumpet</i>	Purcell/Erb	2 part	Allison Publishing Co., Inc.
<i>Stabat Mater</i>	Pergolesi	2 part	G. Schirmer, Inc.
<i>Stars</i>	Kuzmenko	3 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>To Music</i>	Bertraux	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.
<i>When I Set Out For Lyonesse</i>	Bissell	2 part	Gordon V. Thompson
<i>Where the Music Comes From</i>	Holby	2 part	G. Schirmer, Inc.
<i>Who Can Sail</i>	Agnew	3 part	Walton Music Corp.
<i>Winds</i>	Kuzmenko	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

All music is accompanied unless otherwise noted.

*a capella

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIRS IN FLORIDA

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIRS IN FLORIDA

Bach Festival Children's Choir
Rollins College Department of Music
1000 Holt Avenue
Winter Park, FL 32789

Butterfly Childrens' Chorus of Key Chorale
7676 Midnight Pass Road
Sarasota, FL 34242

Civic Kids
1634 Mount Vernon Street
Orlando, FL 32803

Gainesville Youth Choir
5924 N. W. 30th Terrace
Gainesville, FL 32653

Gulf Coast Youth Choirs
P.O. Box 273656
Tampa, FL 33688-3656

Highlands Children's Chorus
3906 Vilabella Drive
Sebring, FL 33872
(Disbanded in 1998)

Indian River Children's Chorus
1929 22nd Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960

Jacksonville University Children's Chorus
9460 Pickwick Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32257

Miami Choral Society: A Children's Choir
1533 Sunset Drive
#215
Miami, FL 33143

Orlando Children's Chorus
Orange County School Board
Music Department
445 West Amelia
Orlando, FL 32801

Pensacola Children's Chorus
P.O. Box 325
Pensacola, FL 392-0325

Seminole Community College Children's Choir
Seminole Community College
Fine Arts Department
100 Weldon Boulevard
Sanford, FL 32772

Stetson University Children's Choir
Stetson University
School of Music
Deland, FL 32720

Tampa Bay Children's Chorus
407 Biltmore Avenue
Tampa, FL 33617

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

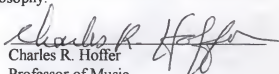
Mary Jeanette McGregor Howle was born in Miami, Florida, on July 15, 1947, to Angus and Clara McGregor. She was graduated from Miami Senior High School in 1965 and received her Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, in 1969. She married John Gunter Howle in 1969 and they moved to Danville, Virginia, where she taught first grade for one year. While John served in Vietnam, she moved to Miami and taught first grade for one year. After his return to the United States, they moved to Colorado while John finished his Air Force service. Their first daughter, Virginia, was born in 1973.

John and Mary Jeanette moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where Mary Jeanette taught music to grades K-6 at a private school. She entered the University of North Florida in 1974 and received her Master of Education degree in 1979. She began teaching in the Duval County Public Schools of Jacksonville in 1977 and has done most of her teaching in elementary music. Their second daughter, Katherine, was born in 1976. Mary Jeanette began her doctoral studies at the University of Florida in 1988.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Phyllis E. Dorman, Chair
Professor of Music


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Charles R. Hoffer
Professor of Music


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Russell L. Robinson
Professor of Music

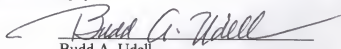
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Linda Lamme
Professor of Instruction and Curriculum

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Arthur Jennings
Associate Professor of Music

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Fine Arts and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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